NEW

# ROYAL WEDDINGS
## Through History

Centuries of royal romance and heartbreak

**Digital** Edition

From the makers of ALL ABOUT HISTORY

FUTURE
SECOND EDITION

ELIZABETH & PHILIP ♥ RAINIER & GRACE ♥ VICTORIA & ALBERT

# ROYAL WEDDINGS
## *Through History*

When Queen Victoria wed Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha on 10 February 1840, their families rejoiced. Not only had their dynastic scheming come to fruition, but the couple had already achieved what so many monarchs could only dream of – they had fallen in love. In an age where marriages were crafted to end wars and cement alliances, love was afterthought. In Royal Weddings Through History, uncover the romances that redefined nations, from the union of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, to Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon.

However, not every royal couple had their happily ever after. Elsewhere in the book, meet the mistresses who used their charms to win power, find out why Prince Charles and Diana's ceremony wasn't the quite the fairytale that it seemed, and read about how the wedding of Spain's king almost ended in his death.

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# ROYAL WEDDINGS
## Through History

**Future PLC** Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ

**Editorial**
Editor **Philippa Grafton**
Designer **Laurie Newman**
Compiled by **Katharine Marsh & Katy Stokes**
Editorial Director **Jon White**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

**Photography**
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**Advertising**
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com

**International**
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

**Circulation**
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

**Production**
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,**
**Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman**

**Management**
Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

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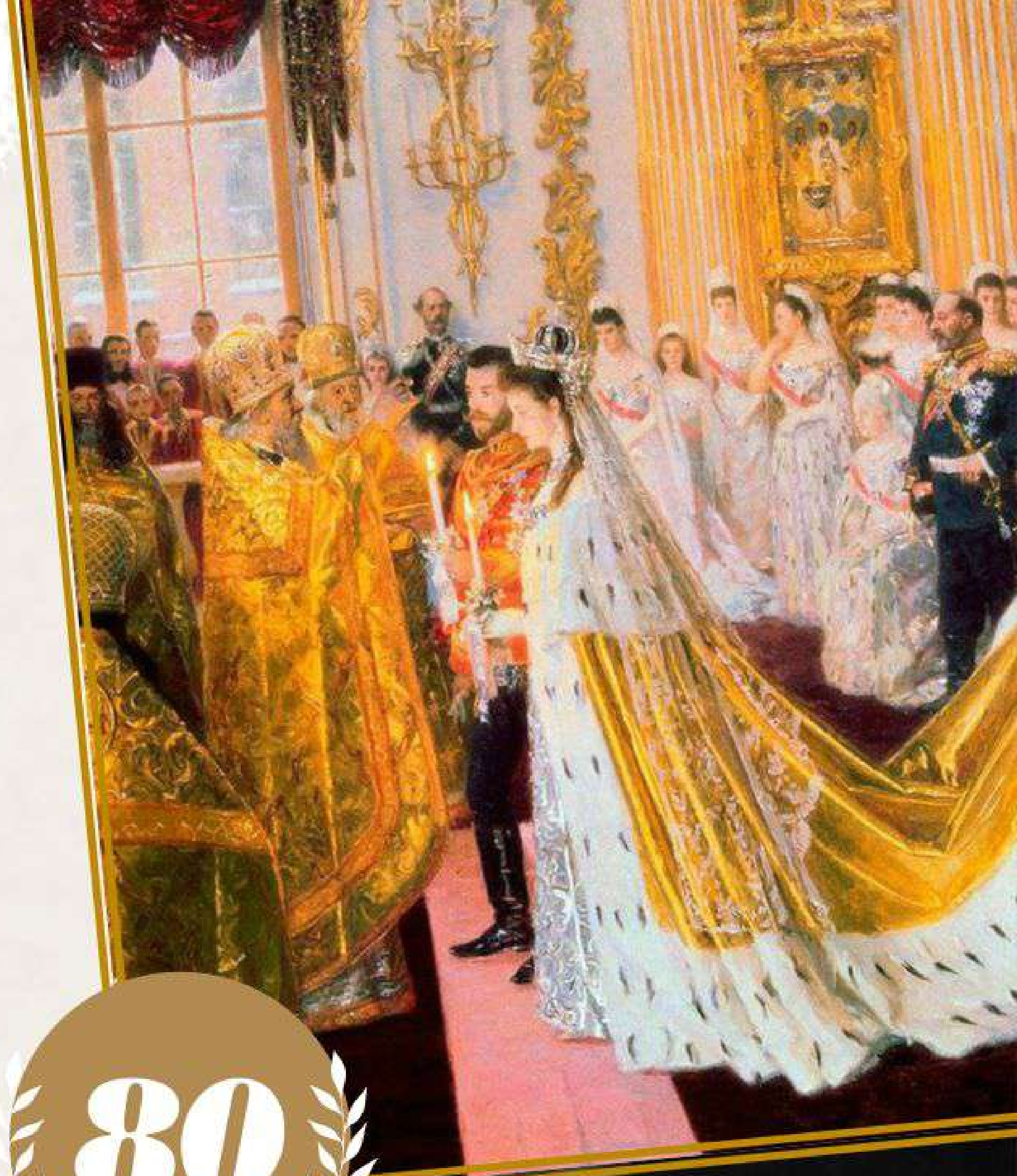

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# 6 Modern royal romances

Royal weddings have been part of royal pageantry for centuries, but times are changing

Written by Melanie Clegg

For centuries, royal weddings have been an important part of the pageantry of royal life, bringing together ruling houses, setting the seal on territorial treaties and even ending wars. In the past they were matters of state and had very little to do with romance, although it was usually hoped that the couple would at least eventually become friends, but times have changed and nowadays even the heirs to thrones are encouraged to marry for love rather than political gain.

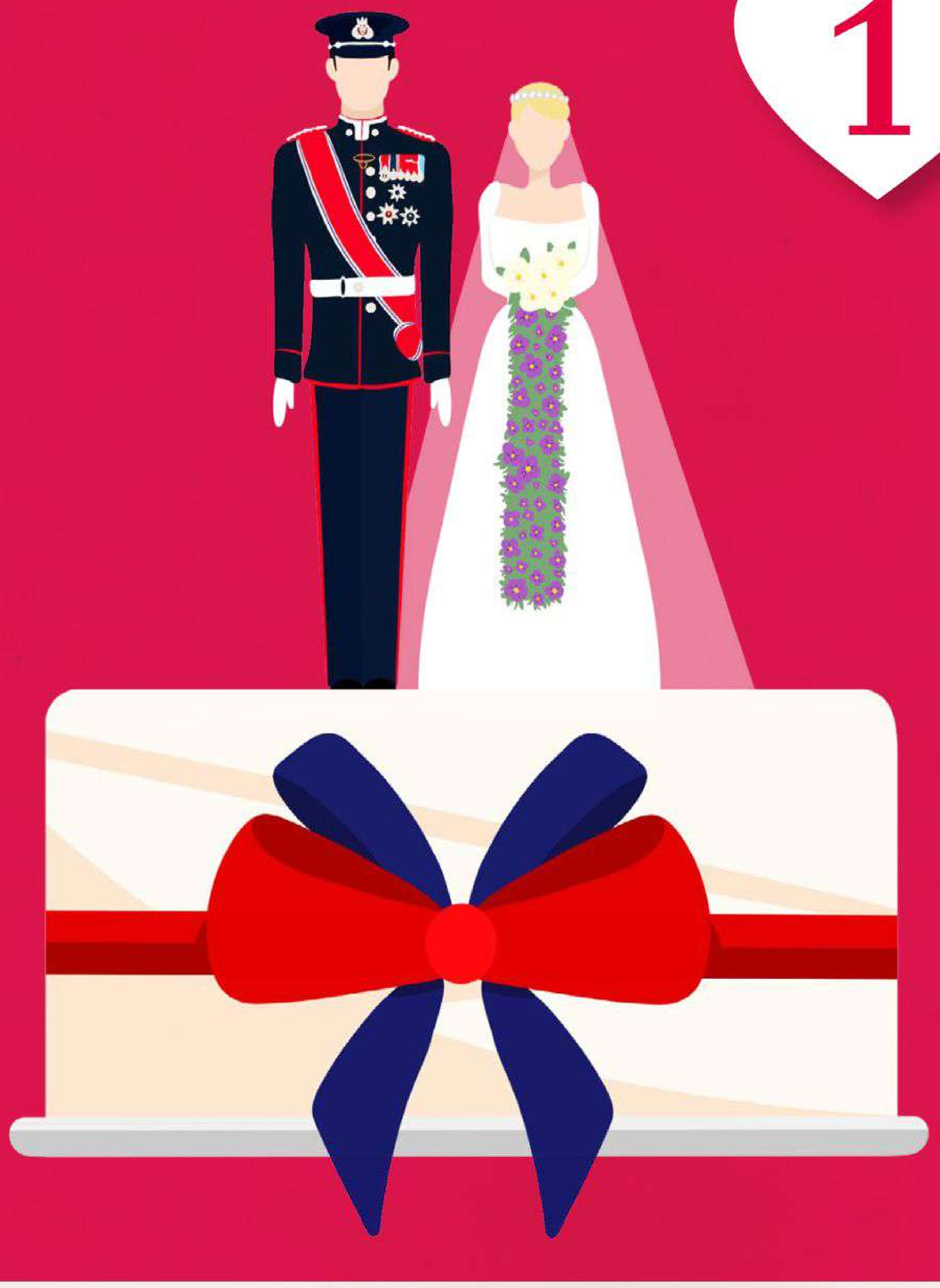
In some ways, the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 was one of the last arranged royal marriages, as the bride was chosen for her social suitability rather than because her husband was madly in love with her. The sad demise of that relationship seems to have resulted in the rules about what constitutes a 'suitable' royal partner being significantly relaxed, meaning that royal families are, on the whole, becoming much more interesting, diverse and even relatable.

Just 100 years ago, it would have been unthinkable that a British prince would marry a divorced American actress, or that the crown prince of Norway would marry a single mother who had worked as a waitress, or that the crown princess of Sweden would end up with her personal trainer. Nowadays, however, most royal spouses are in their 30s and have lived full, independent lives before marrying into ruling dynasties, which means that they are more confident and less willing to remain dutifully in the background. This may cause the occasional problem with protocol, but ultimately means that going forward, royal families are becoming more modern and approachable. While royal weddings are still grand state occasions, they now have a new intimacy and romance that makes them even more compelling and popular than ever.

# 1

## Crown Prince Haakon & Mette-Marit of Norway

### The choice of bride may have raised some eyebrows, but their marriage turned out to be a right royal romance



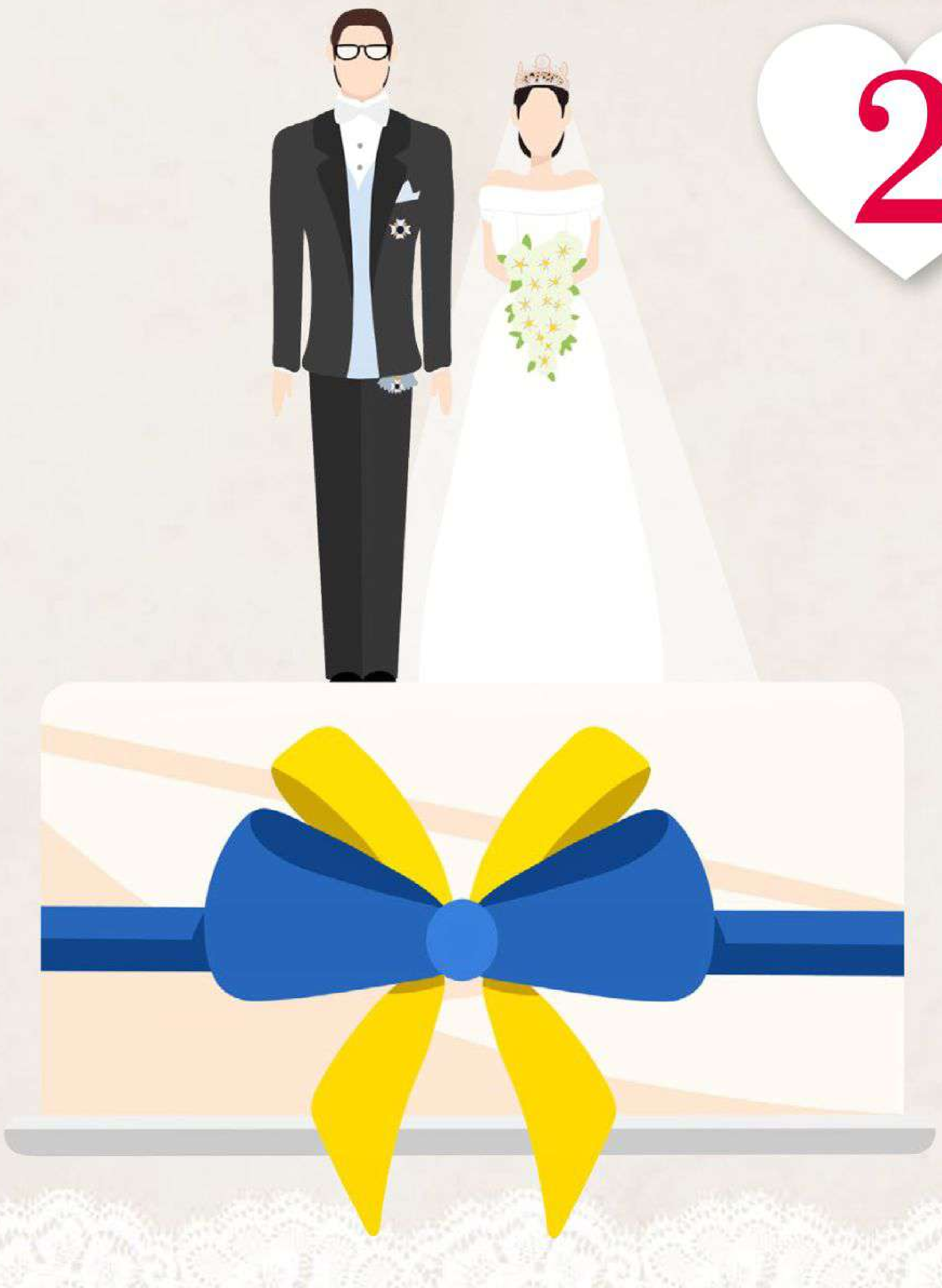
When Crown Prince Haakon, heir apparent to the throne of Norway, announced his engagement to Mette-Marit Tjessem Høiby, who he had been dating for just over a year, some eyebrows were raised over the fact that the bride-to-be was a single mother who worked as a waitress and had allegedly used drugs in the past. The fact that the couple lived together during their eight-month engagement was also disapproved of in some circles, with some media outlets claiming that the controversy surrounding the relationship was adversely affecting the popularity of the Norwegian royal family – an accusation that contributed to Mette-Marit's decision to hold a press conference a few days before the wedding so that she could address the questions that were being asked about her past life. Ultimately, however, the only opinion that really mattered was that of Haakon's father, King Harald V, who gave the match his wholehearted support and royal seal of approval.

The wedding took place in Oslo Cathedral on 25 August 2001 and was a highly emotional affair, with the bride openly crying with happiness when the bishop of Oslo remarked in his sermon on the fact that the couple had "not chosen the easiest path, but love has triumphed". In order to show his full support for his bride, Haakon patiently waited for her at the entrance to the cathedral and escorted her down the aisle instead of her father, while her son, Marius, who was acting as pageboy, walked behind them. Mette-Marit's classically simple white silk crepe gown was created by Norwegian designer Ove Harder Finseth, while her six-metre-long silk tulle veil was held in place by the Edwardian diamond daisy bandeau tiara, a wedding present from her new in-laws, King Harald and Queen Sonja.

# 2

## Crown Princess Victoria & Daniel of Sweden

### After years of speculation and rumours, Crown Princess Victoria blindsided everyone by getting engaged to her personal trainer



As heir apparent to the Swedish throne, Crown Princess Victoria had been the focus of several years of speculation about her personal life as well as the occasional rumours that she was about to get engaged. However, she still managed to surprise almost everyone when it was revealed that she was in a relationship with her personal trainer, Daniel Westling, in 2002.

The engagement was announced in February 2009 and the wedding, which was described as the most significant royal wedding since that of the Prince and Princess of Wales, took place in Stockholm Cathedral on 19 June 2010, which was also the 34th wedding anniversary of Victoria's parents, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia. Victoria teamed her elegant duchess satin white dress with her mother's lace wedding veil and the famous Cameo Tiara, which was originally made for Empress Joséphine and is traditionally worn by Swedish royal brides.

After the ceremony, the couple enjoyed a carriage ride through the streets of Stockholm, which were lined with half a million well wishers, before travelling back to the royal palace where they had their wedding banquet. In recognition of the fact that he was now married to the heir to the throne, the groom became known as His Royal Highness Prince Daniel, Duke of Västergötland.

## 3

# Crown Prince Frederik & Mary of Denmark

When a tarot reader predicted that Mary would move overseas, she could never have guessed that she would become a princess

When Australian advertising executive Mary Donaldson met a handsome Danish man at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, she had absolutely no idea that she was being flirted with by Crown Prince Frederik, the heir apparent to the Danish throne, until someone else revealed his identity later on. Not that Mary was daunted by this surprising piece of information, as she still exchanged numbers with him.

As their long-distance romance flourished, Mary eventually took the step of moving to Copenhagen to be closer to her prince – fulfilling the prediction made a few years earlier by a tarot reader who told her that she would one day move overseas to marry and become famous in the process. The couple got engaged in Rome in autumn 2003, with Frederik presenting Mary with an emerald engagement ring, and they were married in Copenhagen Cathedral just over six months later on 14 May 2004, by which time Mary had become a Danish citizen and converted to the country's Lutheran religion. While Prince Frederik wore military uniform, his bride wore an ivory duchess satin gown created by Danish designer Uffe Frank, along with an antique Irish lace veil that had been worn by every Danish royal bride since 1905. She also wore a beautiful diamond tiara that was a wedding present from her new parents-in-law, Queen Margrethe II and Prince Henrik of Denmark.

Prince Frederik was clearly besotted by his bride and cried more than once during the ceremony, during which he vowed that "from today, Mary is mine and I am hers. I love her and I will protect her with all my love." After the ceremony, the newly married couple rode to the Amalienborg Palace in an open-topped carriage past several hundred thousand people, who lined the streets of Copenhagen to see them go past. The couple enjoyed a sumptuous wedding banquet with an enormous 90-kilogram cake decorated with cartoon versions of the royal couple as the centrepiece, before ending the night with a traditional bridal waltz, after which Frederik surprised Mary by whisking her off to Africa for their honeymoon.

## Career consorts

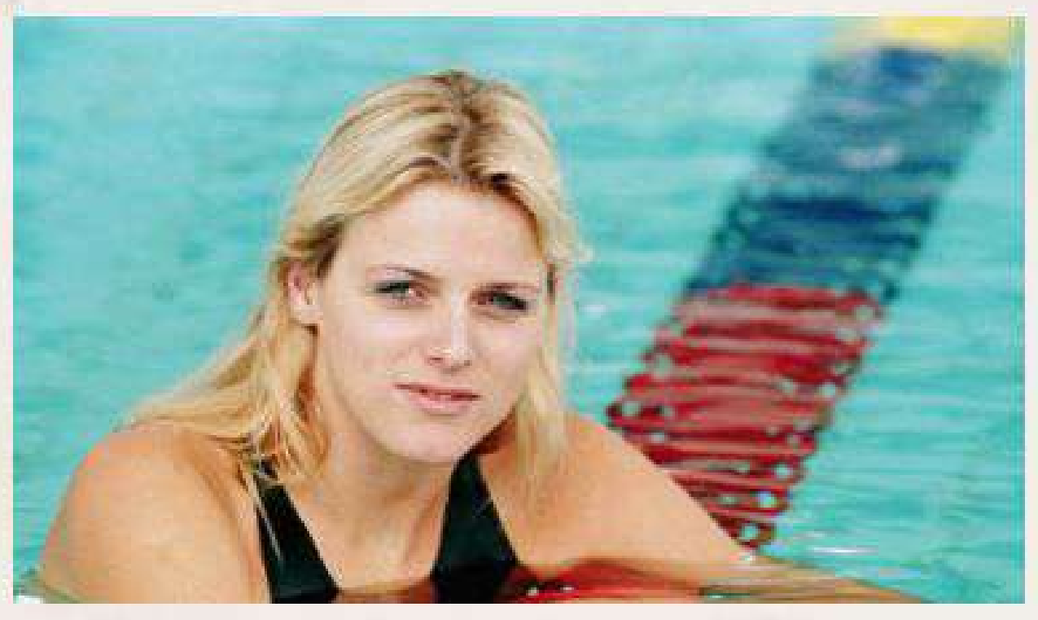
The royal brides that forged their own path before falling in love

**RANIA AL-YASSIN**

Rania was born in Kuwait to Palestinian parents. After finishing school, she went on to the American University in Cairo, where she gained a degree in Business Administration before going to work in the marketing departments of Citibank and Apple.

**SILVIA SOMMERLATH**

Born in Germany, Silvia moved to Brazil at a young age. By the time she left university, she was fluent in five languages. It was while was working at the 1972 Munich Olympics that she first met her future husband, Sweden's then crown prince, Carl Gustaf.



**CHARLENE WITTSTOCK**

Charlene forged a career as a professional swimmer in South Africa before she met Prince Albert of Monaco at a swimming event in 2000. As well as winning medals at home, she also represented her country at two Commonwealth Games and one Olympic Games.

**SOFIA HELLQVIST**

Now princess of Sweden, Sofia first ventured into glamour modelling to fund accounting, business development and yoga courses at college in New York and Stockholm, eventually ending up on the reality television show *Paradise Hotel* in 2005.

**MASAKO OWADA**

Masako studied at Harvard, the University of Tokyo and Oxford. She initially rejected Crown Prince Naruhito's proposals – until he managed to persuade her that as crown princess she could make an even more valuable contribution to Japan's diplomatic efforts.

## 4

## *Felipe VI & Letizia of Spain*

Despite constant scrutiny of his private life, Felipe and Letizia managed to keep their relationship completely secret

When Crown Prince Felipe of Spain, heir apparent of King Juan Carlos, announced his engagement to glamorous Spanish news anchor Letizia Ortiz at a news conference in November 2003, it came as a huge surprise for many people as the couple's year-long relationship had been kept completely secret. Felipe had met Letizia, who had been married before, for the first time at a dinner party held by a mutual friend and immediately hit it off before quickly deciding to marry, with Felipe presenting his fiancée with a beautiful 16-baguette diamond ring.

After the engagement was announced, Letizia moved into an apartment in the Zarzuela Palace in Madrid until the wedding, which took place in the Almudena Cathedral in Madrid on 22 May 2004 in front of over 1,000 guests while an estimated 25 million people watched on television.

The bride's ivory wedding gown was created by Spanish designer Manuel Pertegaz while her lace veil, a wedding present from Prince Felipe, was held in place by the spectacular Prussian Diamond Tiara, which was worn by her mother-in-law, Queen Sofia, on her wedding day in 1962.

After the ceremony, the newly married couple climbed into the back of a Rolls-Royce for a procession through the rainy streets of Madrid before returning to the royal palace, where they appeared on the balcony just as the Sun came out again from behind the clouds. At the wedding banquet, Felipe brought a tear to many eyes by giving a heartfelt speech in which he referred to himself as "a happy man because I have fulfilled my most precious dream. I have married the woman I love."

## 5

## *Willem-Alexander & Máxima of the Netherlands*

Controversy may have taken the shine off their wedding plans, but they couldn't have looked happier or more in love on the day

When successful businesswoman Máxima Zorreguieta Cerruti met Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands in Seville in April 1999, she had no idea that he was a prince. As the daughter of an Argentinian politician, she was no stranger to rubbing shoulders with high-ranking people, but her relationship with Willem-Alexander must still have been a daunting experience – especially when the couple's engagement announcement in March 2001 stirred up controversy about her father's political activities, which would eventually lead to him not being permitted to attend the ceremony.

The pair were married in a civil ceremony in Amsterdam on 2 February 2002, which was followed by a religious ceremony in the city's Nieuwe Kerk on the same day – although Máxima, who was granted dual Argentinian and Dutch citizenship, remains a Roman Catholic, the religious ceremony was conducted according to the official Protestant religion of the Netherlands.

Máxima's ivory mikado silk gown was created by Italian designer Valentino and teamed with a lace veil and a beautiful diamond star tiara from the collection of the Dutch royal family. After the ceremony, the couple returned to the royal palace in the ornate Golden Carriage before making an appearance on the balcony, where they delighted the crowds that had gathered below by kissing several times, clearly delighted to be married at last.

## 6

# Harry & Meghan, Duke and Duchess of Sussex

The whirlwind romance of a handsome prince and a American actress seems like it belongs in the pages of a blockbuster novel

When American actress Meghan Markle headed out on a blind date with Prince Harry in July 2016, she almost certainly had no idea that she was about to meet the love of her life and that they would be engaged the next year. On paper, a romance between a glamorous actress and a handsome prince seems like something out of a novel or a Hollywood film, and when rumours of a relationship between the two first began to surface, hardly anyone thought that it would end in wedding bells for the pair.

As seems to be par for the course with modern royal weddings, there was some controversy about the fact that Meghan is mixed race, divorced and estranged from several family members, including her father, who did not attend the wedding. However, the couple rightly didn't let this take the shine off their happiness and when their wedding day dawned on 19 May 2018, there was hardly anyone who didn't wholeheartedly wish them well.

The wedding ceremony took place in St George's Chapel in the precincts of Windsor Castle and was attended by 600 guests, which included several celebrities as well as senior members of the royal family. Meanwhile, 18 million people in the UK and around 29 million in the US, where Meghan was being hailed as the first American princess, watched on television at home. Meghan's stunning white silk gown was created by Clare Waight Keller, artistic director of the French fashion house Givenchy, and was worn with a 4.8-metre lace veil, which took longer to create than the dress, and a diamond bandeau tiara that was originally made for Queen Mary in 1932.

When the royal couple emerged into the sunlight after their wedding, they paused on the chapel steps to share a kiss before climbing into an open carriage for a procession around Windsor. It was then back to the castle for the wedding reception hosted by the Queen, where guests were entertained by Elton John. There was another smaller evening reception at Frogmore House, hosted by the groom's father, Prince Charles, and attended by only close family and friends. According to royal custom, the Queen bestowed the title of duke of Sussex upon her grandson on the morning of the wedding, with Meghan becoming duchess when they married later that day.

> *“There was hardly anyone who didn't wholeheartedly wish them well”*

# *The royal rule book*

Every family has its own peculiarities but perhaps none more so than the British royal family, which has developed several rules over the years

### 1. *Royal wedding bouquets have to include a sprig of myrtle*

The plant myrtle is said to represent love and marriage so it's no surprise that it has been a traditional feature in wedding bouquets for centuries. Queen Victoria included some in her bouquet when she married Prince Albert in February 1840 and later planted a myrtle bush at Osborne House, which has provided sprigs for every royal bride's bouquet ever since.

### 2. *Wedge shoes must never be worn in the Queen's presence*

Although not everyone is a fan of wedge shoes, it seems that the Queen has an especially strong hatred of them and has banned female members of the royal family from wearing them in her presence. It's not known why she dislikes them so much but this is especially bad news for the duchess of Cambridge, who is especially fond of wedge shoes.

### 3. *Tiaras can only be worn by brides and married women*

Although anyone can wear a tiara if they are that way inclined, according to royal etiquette only brides and married women are allowed to wear tiaras to official occasions such as state banquets and balls. Luckily for Meghan, though, the Queen has one of the largest and most opulent tiara collections in the world and is apparently happy to lend her treasures out to family.

### 4. *No one is allowed to start eating before the Queen*

According to royal etiquette, it is considered extremely bad manners to start eating your meal before the Queen has picked up her knife and fork. Unluckily for slow eaters, the meal will then end as soon as the Queen has finished eating and placed her cutlery on her plate. However, although Her Majesty doesn't have a huge appetite, she has developed a strategy of pushing food around on her plate until she thinks everyone else has finished eating.

### 5. *Royal bridesmaids are (almost always) under the age of 18*

Ever since Queen Victoria walked down the aisle followed by 12 bridesmaids, royal brides have been attended by several female attendants. Although Victoria's were all young women in their late teens, the average age of royal bridesmaids has since dropped and it is now considered traditional for modern royal brides to be attended by a gaggle of small children.

### 6. *Only the Queen is allowed to reprimand her corgis*

As the new duchess of Sussex is known to be a dog lover, it's likely that she has already made friends with the Queen's corgis, but it is absolutely forbidden for anyone other than the Queen to tell them off. Although they look adorable, the royal corgis have been known to bite footmen and even managed to knock a royal butler unconscious after they dragged him down the stairs.

### 7. *You must not discuss your political views in public*

Although the royal family can vote in elections and referendums, they deliberately abstain from participating as it is important that they always appear to be as neutral as possible. For an outspoken modern young woman like Meghan Markle, who is a self-proclaimed feminist, this might be a bit difficult to get used to.

### 8. *Don't buy expensive Christmas presents*

When you have several millions at your disposal it must tempting to go overboard when it comes to presents, but extravagant gift buying is frowned upon when the royal family gather for their traditional Christmas at Sandringham. In a nod to their German heritage, gifts are opened on Christmas Eve and tend to be either practical or jokey rather than lavish.

### 9. *Don't serve shellfish to the Queen (or garlic!)*

Thanks to shellfish's dubious reputation for being the cause of more than its fair share of food poisonings, it is permanently off the menu at royal meals as the Queen can't risk becoming suddenly ill and having to pull out of her duties. It's also advisable never to serve anything with garlic to the Queen as she is not a fan and has banned it from her own kitchens.

### 10. *You will have to do a lot of curtseying to family members*

Everyone curtseys to the Queen, to show deference to her position, but then there is a strict hierarchy that means former 'commoners' like the duchesses of Cambridge and Sussex curtsey to the 'blood princesses' when their husbands aren't present, but the princesses have to curtsey to them when William and Harry are in the room.

© Getty, Thinkstock; Illustration by Kym Winters

### 1 May 1464

# Edward IV & Elizabeth Woodville

## A royal wedding surrounded by romance, myth and legend

**Written by June Woolerton**

When Edward IV attended a meeting of his closest advisers at Reading Abbey in September 1464, he found them in the middle of planning a royal wedding. The great politicians of the day had decided that their young king, feted for his good looks, charm and military prowess, was ready for marriage and they'd chosen a strategically important European princess as his bride. There was just one problem. Edward admitted, as the plans were being explained in detail to him, that he was already married.

The first king of the House of York had actually plighted his troth months earlier in a secret ceremony attended by just a handful of people. And while the Royal Council was hoping that his hand in marriage would seal political and trade alliances beneficial to a country still recovering from the tumult of civil war, Edward had instead chosen an English widow of relatively lowly birth as his wife. To make matters worse, his new queen's family had once been loyal followers of the House of Lancaster, the dynasty that Edward had helped overthrow.

The king could see how shocked and disappointed his advisers were by his marriage but he didn't care. Edward was in love. It isn't certain when he fell head over heels for Elizabeth Woodville, but the marriage that caused shockwaves across England and Europe soon gave rise to romantic legends that have stood the test of time.

Edward and Elizabeth are traditionally thought to have met beneath a tree in Whittlebury Forest in Northamptonshire, known afterwards as the Queen's Oak. It was close to the village of Grafton, where Elizabeth had spent much of her life and where she had returned following the death of her husband, Sir John Grey, who had been killed fighting for the Lancastrians at the Second Battle of St Albans in 1461. By early 1464, Elizabeth was caught up in a fight of her own, as she struggled to gain control of the inheritance of the couple's two young sons. Determined and ambitious, she decided only the king could help her.

Elizabeth took her boys, Thomas and Richard, into the forest and waited for Edward who was hunting nearby. As he rode past, she threw herself on her knees and begged for his support. Legend has it that he fell instantly in love with her and began his pursuit. However, his reputation as a womaniser had preceded him and Elizabeth resisted all his advances. As early as 1468, a story circulated in Europe that she had even held a dagger to her own throat as he tried to seduce her, telling him she would rather die than lose her honour. Edward became even more determined to win her and as the spring festival of May Day approached, he proposed marriage.

The young king, then just 21, arrived in nearby Stony Stratford on 30 April 1464 and the next morning, as dawn was breaking, travelled the five or so miles to Grafton to marry Elizabeth Woodville, who was then around 26 years old. There was no requirement for written records of marriages at the time and the king had no intention of telling anyone what he was up to, so no official documentation of where the couple wed exists. However, they were widely believed to have married in the Hermitage at Grafton, on the outskirts of the sleepy village which had been home to the genteel but far from aristocratic Woodvilles for decades.

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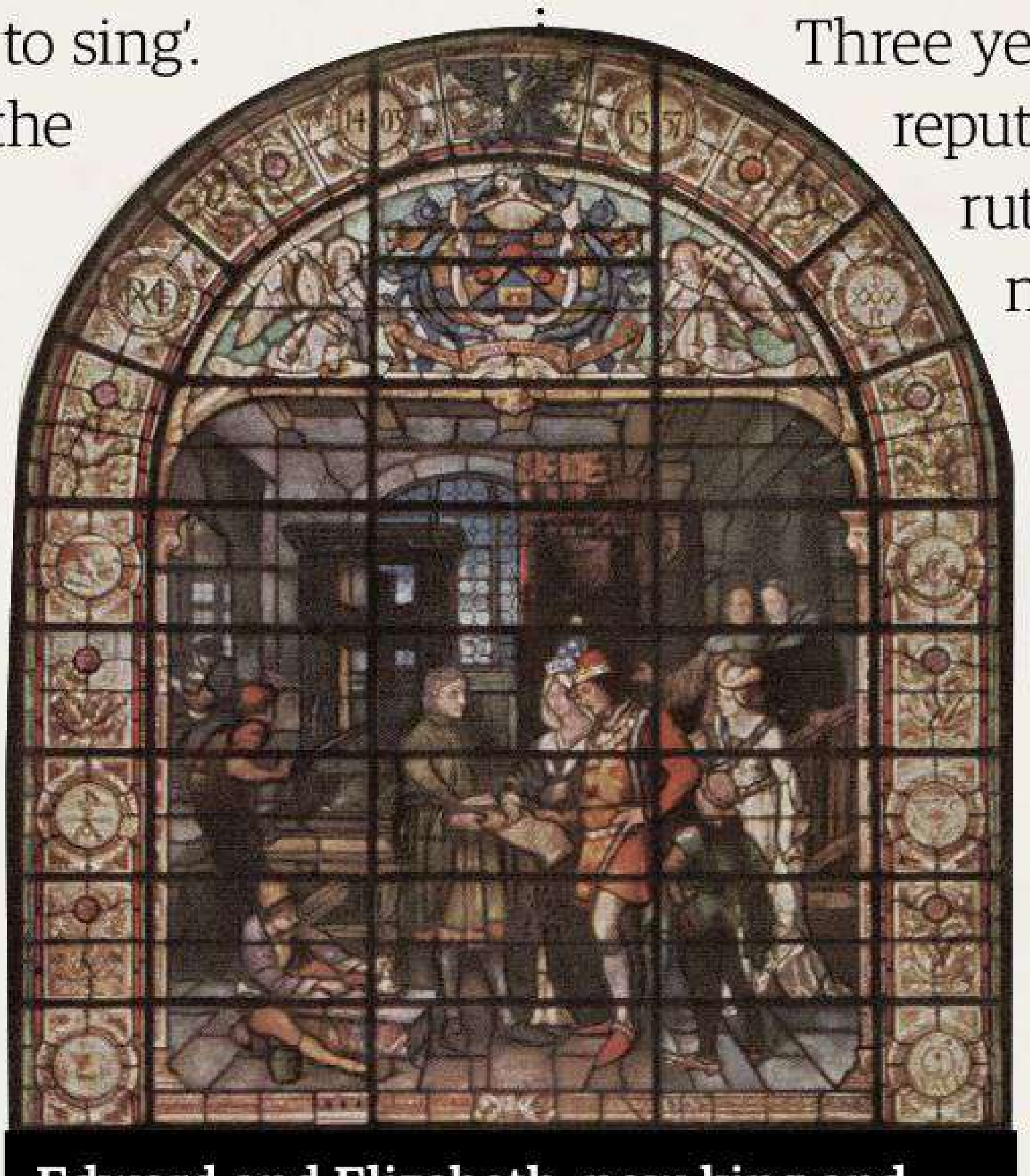
A near-contemporary depiction of Edward and Elizabeth's marriage. In reality, there were no more than five other people present at their wedding

Elizabeth had arrived at the chapel with her mother, Jacquetta, and the only other people present to see the king marry a commoner was the clergyman performing the ceremony, two servants, and a boy who 'helped the priest to sing'. As soon as the service was over, the couple were whisked away to a private chamber to consummate the marriage before Edward headed back to his courtiers. He returned to his new bride over the next few days with his mother-in-law ensuring that they spent time together without anyone, even her own husband, aware of what was going on. Then Edward departed for business in the north of England leaving his secret queen behind.


Edward and Elizabeth, now king and queen, meet William Caxton – the couple were patrons of the arts and for many, the perfect medieval monarchs

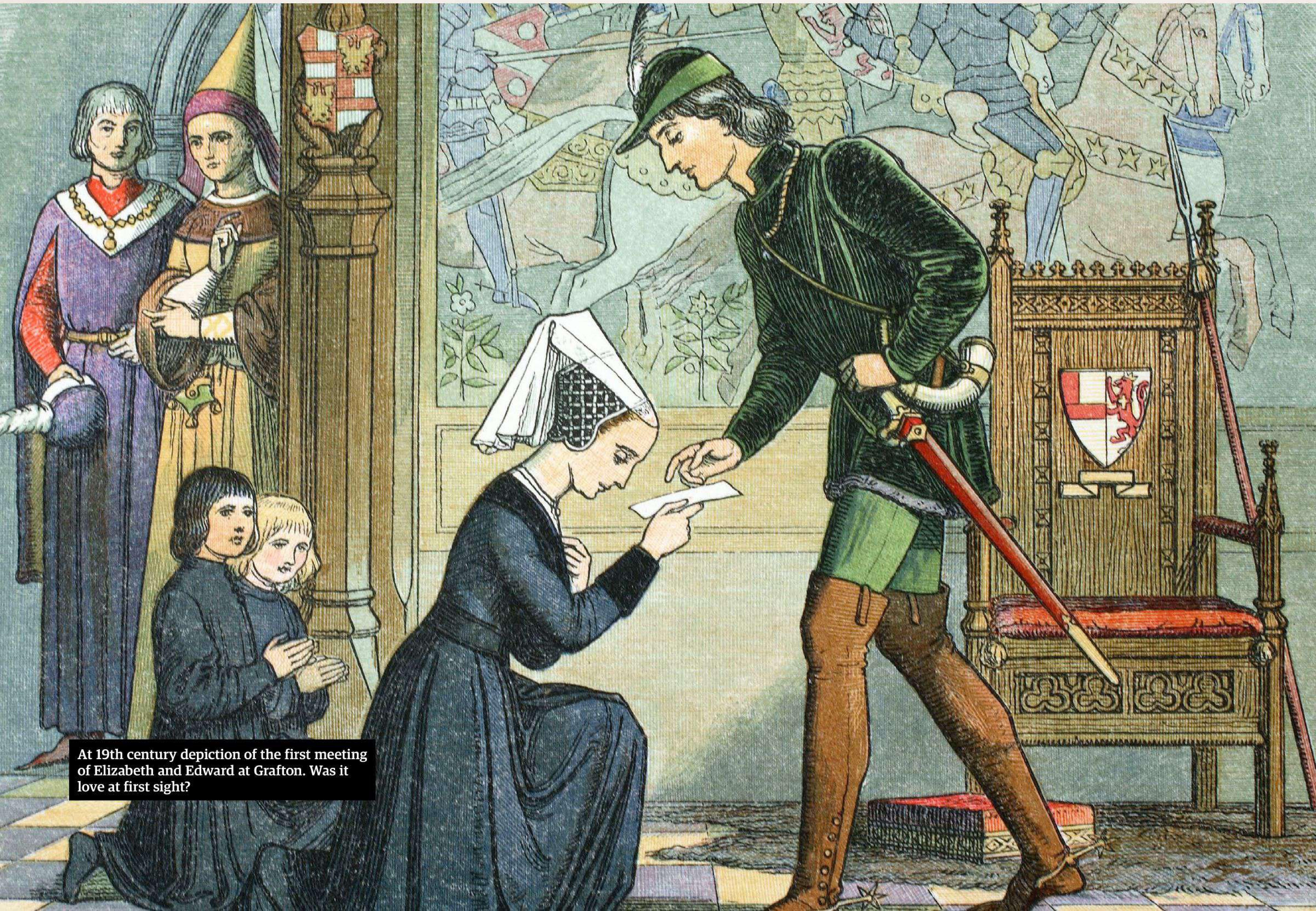
However, Elizabeth's position was far from secure. Edward had a reputation for making promises he didn't keep and Elizabeth was far from being an ideal consort. Although she was universally acknowledged as extremely beautiful with long, golden hair and piercing eyes, she had little else to recommend her as a queen. There were also rumours that the king had promised marriage or had even been betrothed to other women who had been discarded once he had grown tired of them.

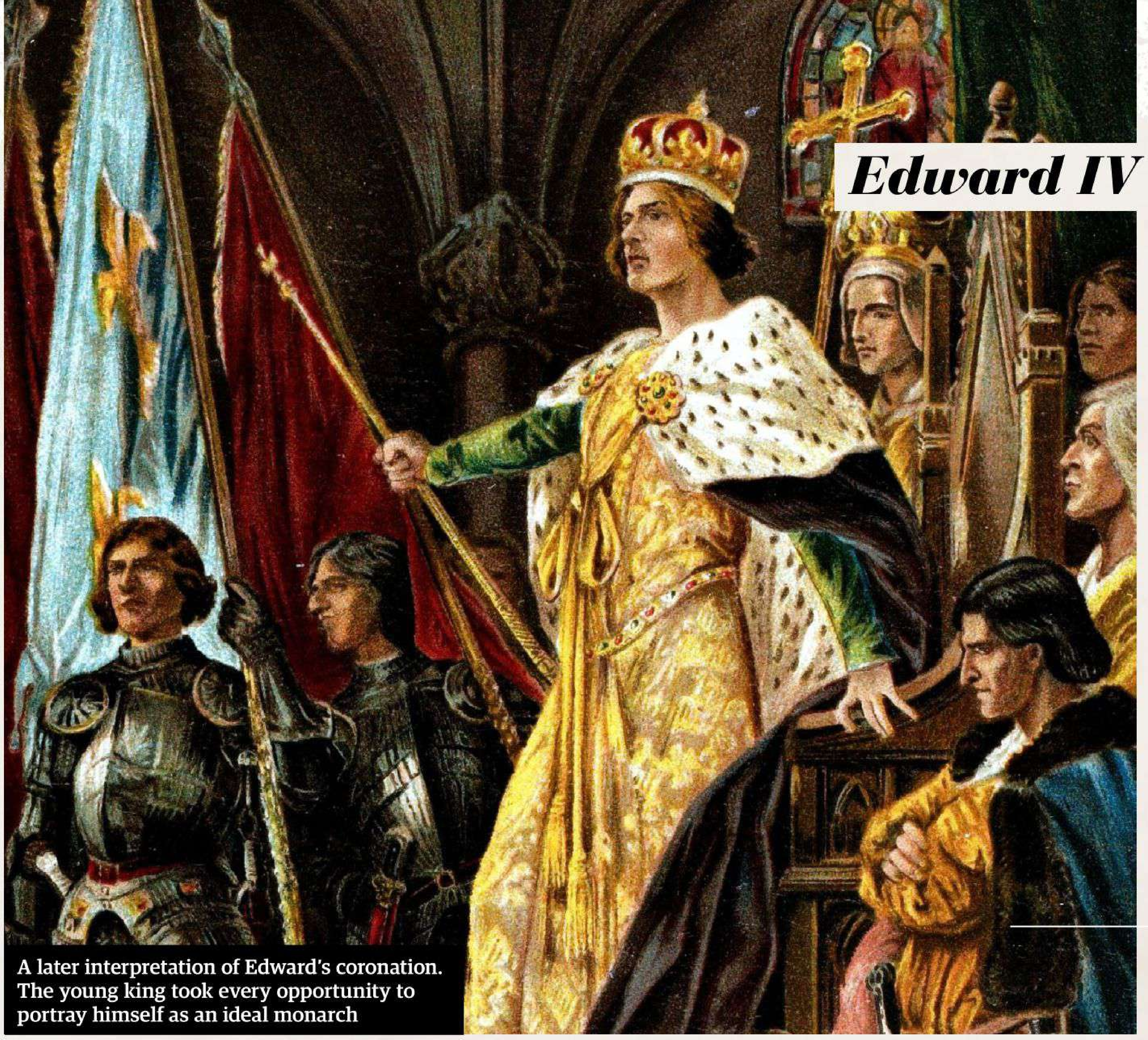
Three years into his reign, Edward had a reputation for being persuasive and ruthless in equal measure. There was no guarantee he would ever return.

The summer of 1464 saw him occupied with settling parts of his new kingdom. He had taken the throne just three years earlier, following a decisive victory at the Battle of Towton, which had quelled the fight between York and Lancaster after years of bloodshed. Born in 1442 as the second son of Richard, Duke of York, he had learned the art of war early and claimed the crown as a teenager. He was also heavily dependent on the wealthy, wise and wily Earl of Warwick who held so much sway over government and his fellow nobles that he was known as the Kingmaker. But around the time that he married Elizabeth, Edward had shown signs of taking back some of the power that had passed to Warwick.

Elizabeth had demonstrated plenty of ambition of her own, making a deal with the king's friend, William, Lord Hastings, in her battle for her sons' inheritance. But her most useful weapon now that she had a crown in her grasp was her mother. Although she had spent the past two decades in rural isolation, raising a large family, the king's new mother-in-law belonged to European royalty and had once been one of the most important women in England. Born Jacquetta of Luxembourg, her first marriage had been to John, Duke of Bedford, a son of the first Lancastrian king, Henry IV. His death left her a widow at 18 and she had then begun a secret affair with a servant sent to look after her, Richard Woodville. It shocked the court when she announced soon afterwards that she had married him. If Elizabeth needed a pattern to follow to overcome objections to a clandestine and controversial wedding, she had the perfect example in Jacquetta who had seen off all opposition, kept her royal pension and even seen her husband advance through the ranks while she nurtured their growing family.

Jacquetta also had contacts at court and links with continental power players, including the Duke of Burgundy, a man who Edward singled out as a potential ally for England. This went against the


At 19th century depiction of the first meeting of Elizabeth and Edward at Grafton. Was it love at first sight?


A later interpretation of Edward's coronation. The young king took every opportunity to portray himself as an ideal monarch

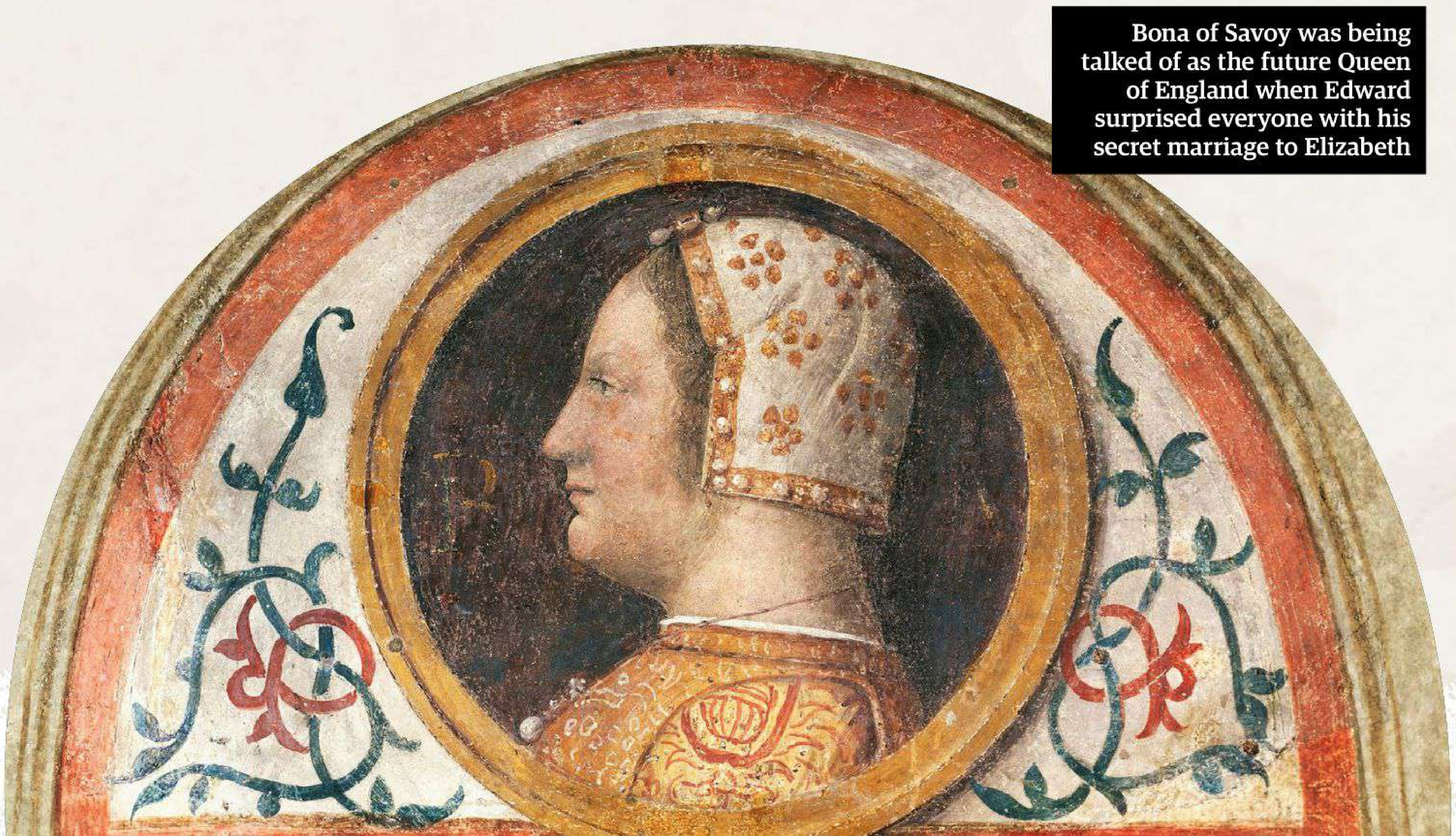
foreign policy plans of the Earl of Warwick, who had spent much of 1464 fostering links with the French court, rivals of the Burgundians. His chosen bride for Edward had been Bona of Savoy, a sister-in-law of King Louis XI of France, and the king's decision to reject that for a family linked to an opposing power was a heavy blow.

As Edward stood before the council explaining that he was already married, the power dynamic with the Kingmaker began to change. Warwick had lost face in front of his peers and now had to explain to his French allies that the marriage which had seemed so certain was now impossible. While the young king had undoubtedly fallen in love, his new wife also gave him an opportunity to begin to flex his muscles in a government which until then had been Warwick's as much as his.

If the Kingmaker felt aggrieved, he covered it well. Just weeks later, he walked alongside Elizabeth as she made her way into Reading Abbey to be introduced to court as the wife of the king. With Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, also at her side, the knight's daughter from Northamptonshire was acknowledged by all as Queen of England.

Her position was cemented once and for all with a glittering coronation on 26 May 1465 at Westminster Abbey. Elizabeth, her long golden hair flowing loose down her back, was every inch a queen. But while the great nobles of the day celebrated in public, behind the scenes they were angered and worried as Edward began arranging spectacular marriages for Elizabeth's brothers and sisters. The Woodville family saw their power expand while Edward's choice of spouses for his in-laws changed the makeup of the ruling classes. It helped establish his own power base and chipped away at the influence of his advisers.

But whatever the political consequences of Edward and Elizabeth's marriage, there is no doubt that it was based on a real and deep love. Their secret marriage has been shrouded in legend. It remains a magical and almost mythical tale and one of the most romantic of all royal weddings.


Bona of Savoy was being talked of as the future Queen of England when Edward surprised everyone with his secret marriage to Elizabeth

## Edward's past promise of marriage

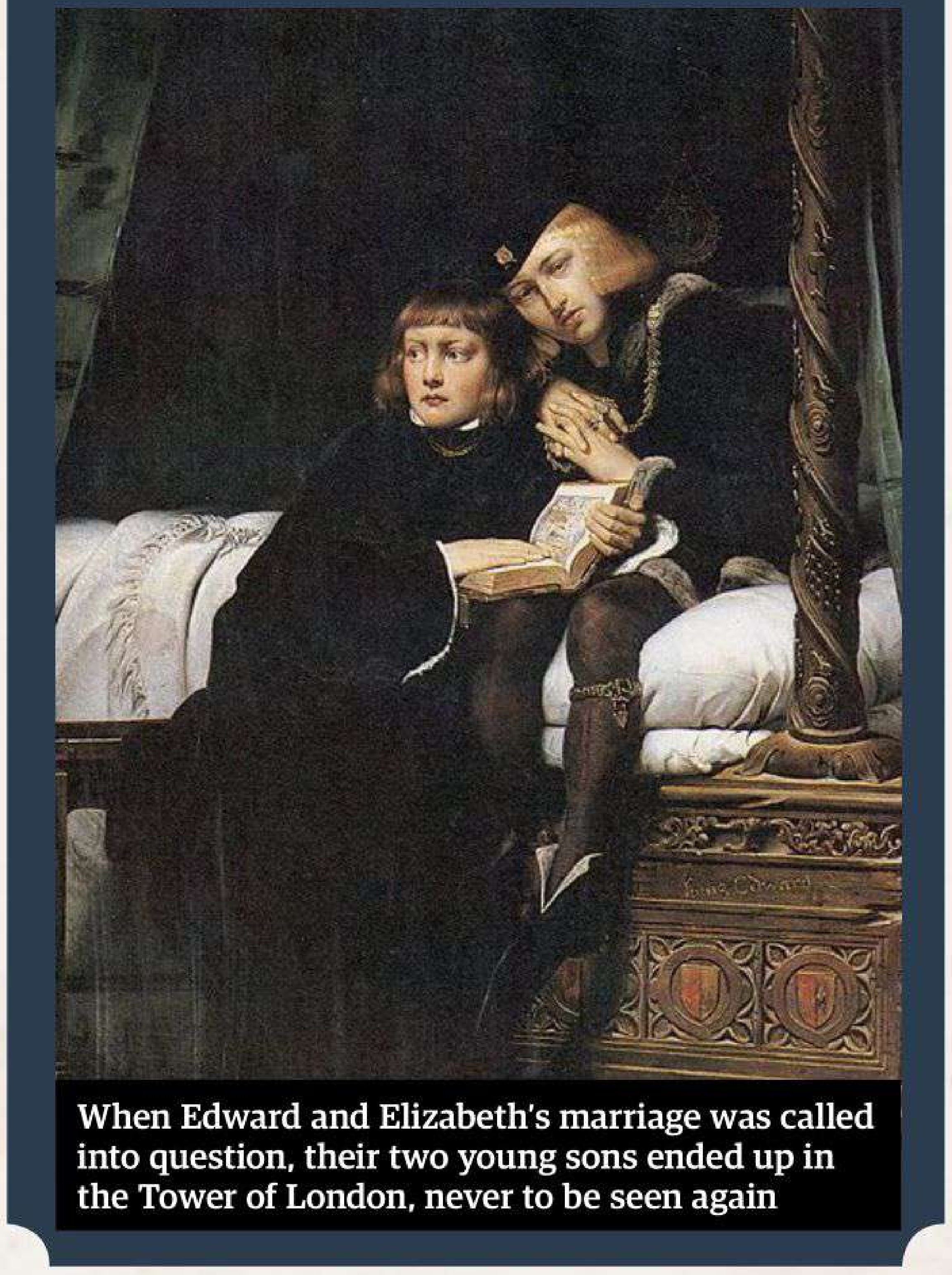
### Edward seduced another widow with the promise of a crown, leaving his widow and children vulnerable

When Edward died unexpectedly in 1483, Elizabeth found herself under siege from his family. His brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, made a grab for the throne now occupied by her 12-year-old son, Edward V. And at the heart of the attack was a claim that Edward and Elizabeth's romantic wedding had been invalid.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells, Richard Stillington, swore Edward had entered a pre-contract of marriage with a woman called Lady Eleanor Talbot before he met his queen. If Stillington's allegations were true then Edward and Elizabeth's wedding didn't count and their children were illegitimate. It was enough for Gloucester to get Parliament to pass the act, *Titulus Regius*, barring his brother's family from the throne and confirming himself as King Richard III.

There was no chance of asking the supposed bride herself because Eleanor Talbot had died in 1468. Like Elizabeth, she had been a noted beauty from a genteel family who had been widowed young, leaving her with problems over part of her inheritance. However, her relationship with Edward was shortlived, with the young royal quickly moving on to another romantic conquest. When his marriage to Elizabeth was announced, Eleanor said nothing.

The alleged marriage was struck from the history books when Henry Tudor took the throne in 1485. Now Henry VII, he ordered the destruction of all the copies of *Titulus Regius* with just one somehow surviving, to be found years later and once more raise questions about Edward and Elizabeth's wedding.


When Edward and Elizabeth's marriage was called into question, their two young sons ended up in the Tower of London, never to be seen again

© Getty; Alamy; WIKI

## Charles the Bold, & Margaret of York

*3rd July 1468*

It was a marriage that was a few years in the making with negotiations beginning in the early 1460s. On 3 July 1468, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, married Margaret of York in a private ceremony in a room in the house of Eustace Weyts, the ducal steward, in Damme. They then attended high mass at the Church of Our Lady (pictured). Afterwards, Charles left for Bruges, while Margaret was toured through the cities of the duchy.

© Alamy

## 19 October 1469

# Isabella & Ferdinand

A dangerous wedding between two ambitious royals that began the creation of a united Spain

**Written by June Woolerton**

Many a Medieval royal marriage was based on dynastic desires, with princes and princesses following their families' wishes and plighting their troths for political and pragmatic reasons. Like other regal couples of the time, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon knew that their wedding, on 19 October 1468 in the city of Valladolid in northwest Spain, would create a powerful partnership that could be of benefit to both of their royal houses. What made their union so different was that the teenagers who stood before the altar that day had instigated the marriage themselves against fierce opposition that could have cost them their lives.

Ferdinand, then just 17, had ridden through dangerous territory in disguise to reach his bride, while Isabella, a year older than her groom, had defied a king and torn up a peace treaty to be able to marry her distant cousin. They met just days before their controversial wedding to finalise the terms of their political partnership, only to find themselves falling in love. By the time they married, under the cover of night, a deep-rooted passion had further cemented the union that both were so determined to make happen and which would turn them into the most celebrated monarchs of their generation.

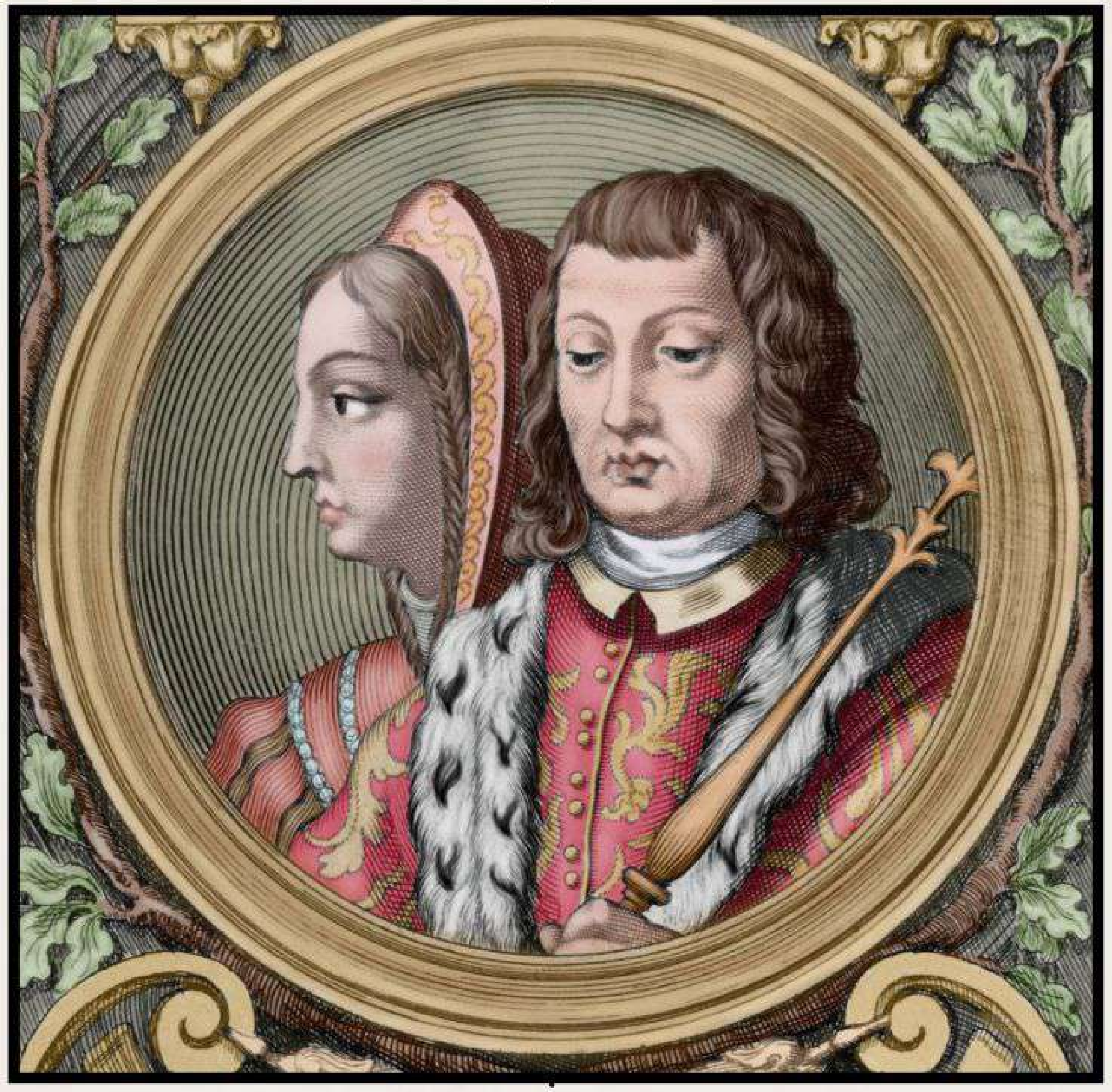
The driving force in this royal romance was Isabella herself. The only surviving daughter of King John II of Castile and his second wife, Isabella of Portugal, she had hovered close to the throne since the moment of her birth on 22 April 1451 at Madrigal de las Altas Torres in Ávila. When her father died, in 1454, her older half-brother became King Henry IV while her younger full brother, Alfonso, was first in the line of succession. At the age of just three, Isabella was already a potentially useful marriage prospect for her dynasty. Henry sent her to live with her mother and brother in Arévalo as he fought to establish his rule. But his personal and public lives soon fragmented and Castile's crown began to wobble.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand was growing up in the smaller but more stable neighbouring kingdom of Aragon. Born on 10 March 1452 in the Sada Palace, his father was King John II of Aragon who as a young man had made trouble for Isabella's father in the early part of his reign. John and his second wife, Joanna, raised Ferdinand as a typical Medieval prince with a strong military background. In 1461, the death of John's son Charles from his first marriage turned Ferdinand into heir to the throne. Both men also had a claim to the throne of Castile. A potential marriage between Isabella and Ferdinand was mooted several times but initially came to nothing.

In reality, Ferdinand was just one of several possible husbands that the notoriously indecisive Henry IV considered for his half-sister. His favourite candidate was King Alfonso V of Portugal, a useful ally and brother of his second wife, Joanna. The queen of Castile had taken control of Isabella in 1462 when the princess and her brother, Alfonso, were ordered to return to court around the time that Joanna gave birth to a daughter, a new heir to the throne. However, the baby's paternity was soon called into question and Henry's rule began to unravel further.

Isabella and Ferdinand would be given the title of the 'Catholic Monarchs' during their reign

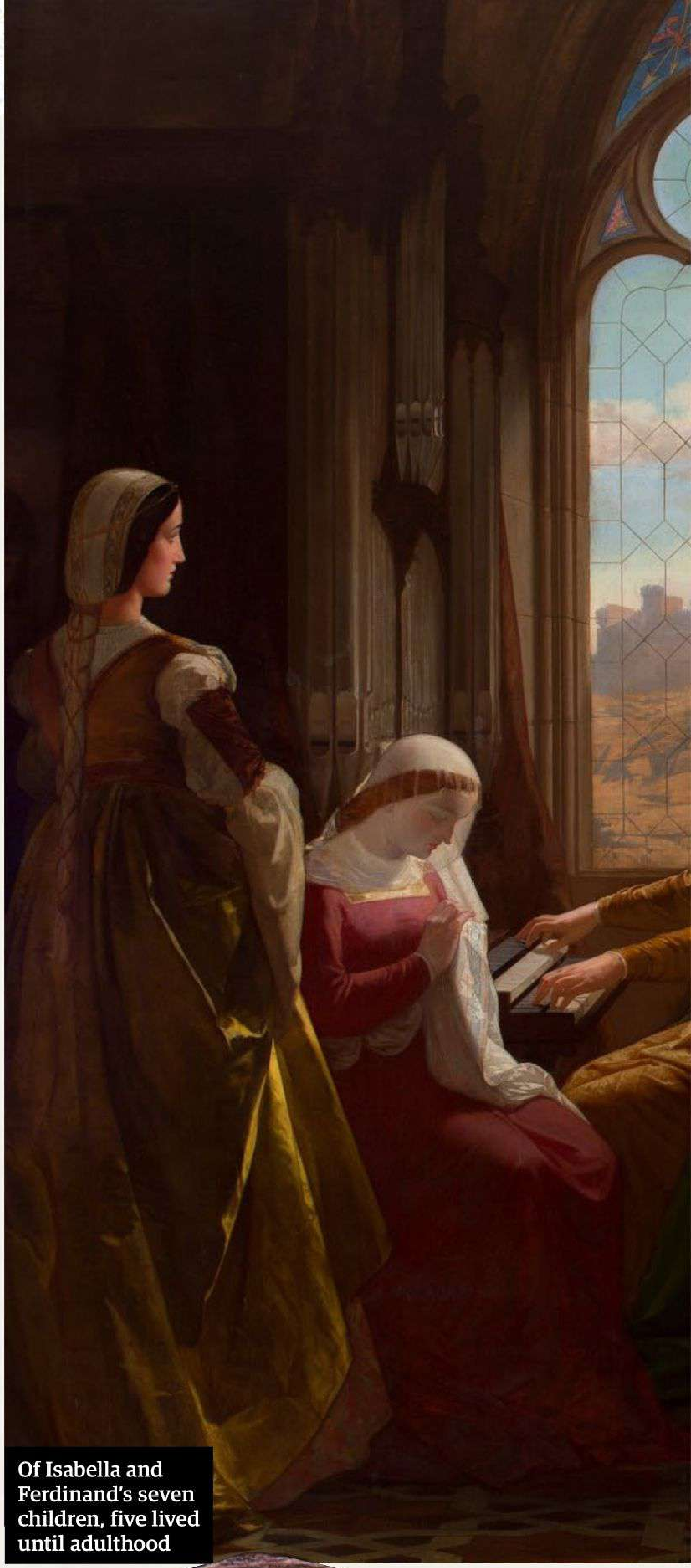
When a group of nobles rebelled against the king in 1465 and pledged loyalty to young Alfonso instead, Isabella became even more attractive to those who wanted to augment their standing with a useful royal marriage. The all-powerful noble, Juan Pacheco, even tried to arrange a wedding with his brother. Isabella could barely contain her relief when that intended groom died on his way to claim his bride.



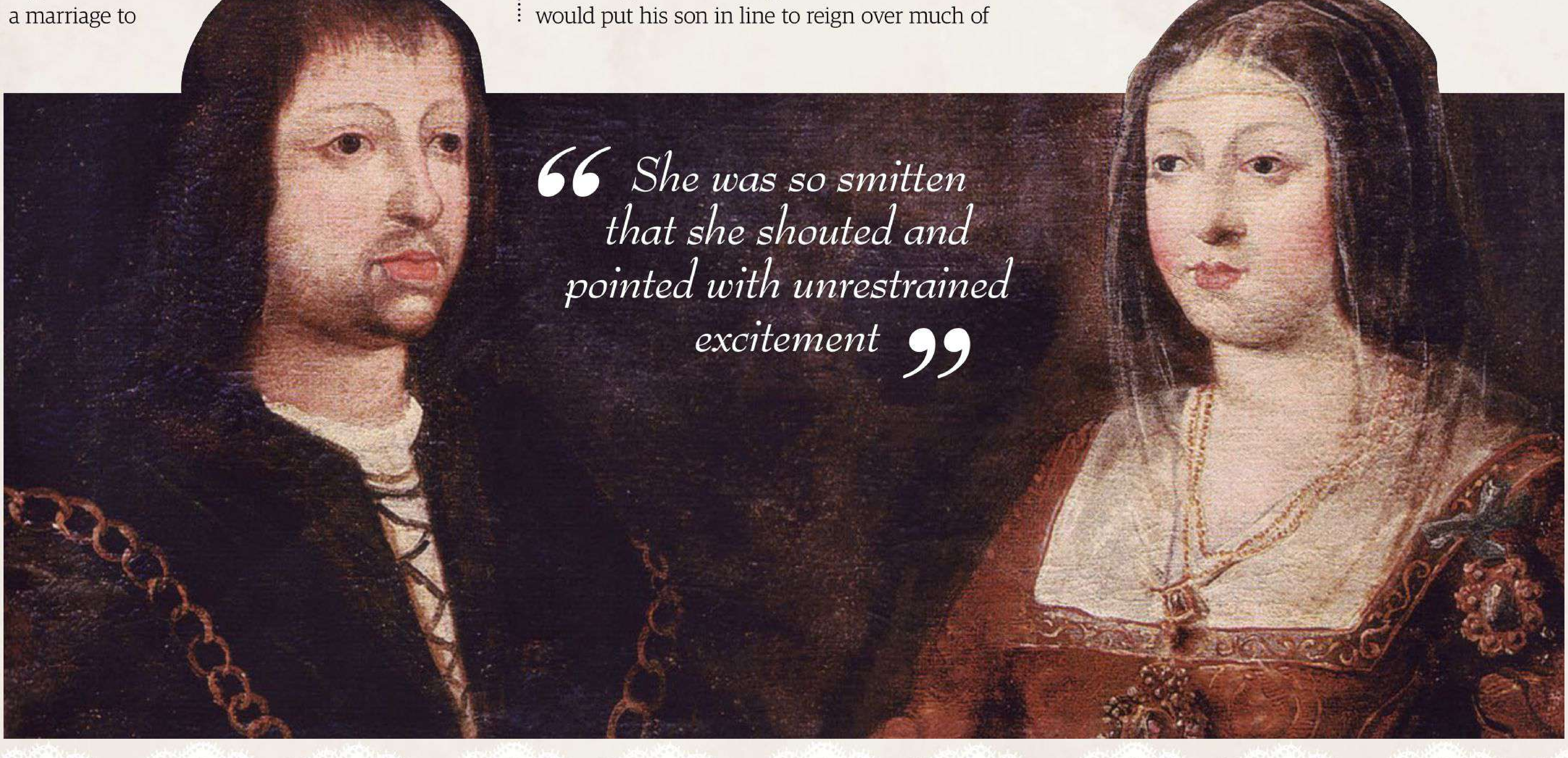
Another death would have far more serious consequences. Isabella's beloved younger brother died in 1467 and while she grieved his loss deeply, she also quickly realised that her own position had become more important and as such, more precarious. Some in Castile wanted to make her queen but instead she negotiated a truce with Henry that named her as his heir. The deal done at Toros de Guisando in September 1467 also saw Henry agree that Isabella would have the right to veto any husband he chose for her. In an age when princesses did the marital bidding of their male relatives, it was an unprecedented act of royal rebellion.

Isabella played the dutiful sister, living at court with Henry and openly giving him her support as his heir. Behind the scenes, however, she had opened negotiations for a marriage to Ferdinand of Aragon despite being surrounded by spies and suspicious nobles. In an age where wives were expected to submit to their husbands in all things, Isabella knew that whoever she married would have a claim to rule Castile if the crown really did come to her. She was determined to marry someone who would give her a chance to exercise her own authority and the ebullient and ambitious heir to Aragon seemed to fit the bill perfectly. The meetings that led to marriage were furtive and dangerous, with later descriptions claiming that Isabella even spoke to one envoy as he waded across a fast-flowing river in the dark. John of Aragon was so keen to secure Isabella as a bride for his son that he signed blank letters to send with his representatives who were given permission to offer any sum of cash they thought would result in a marriage. Isabella, however, was more interested in ensuring her freedom after she had said 'I do'.

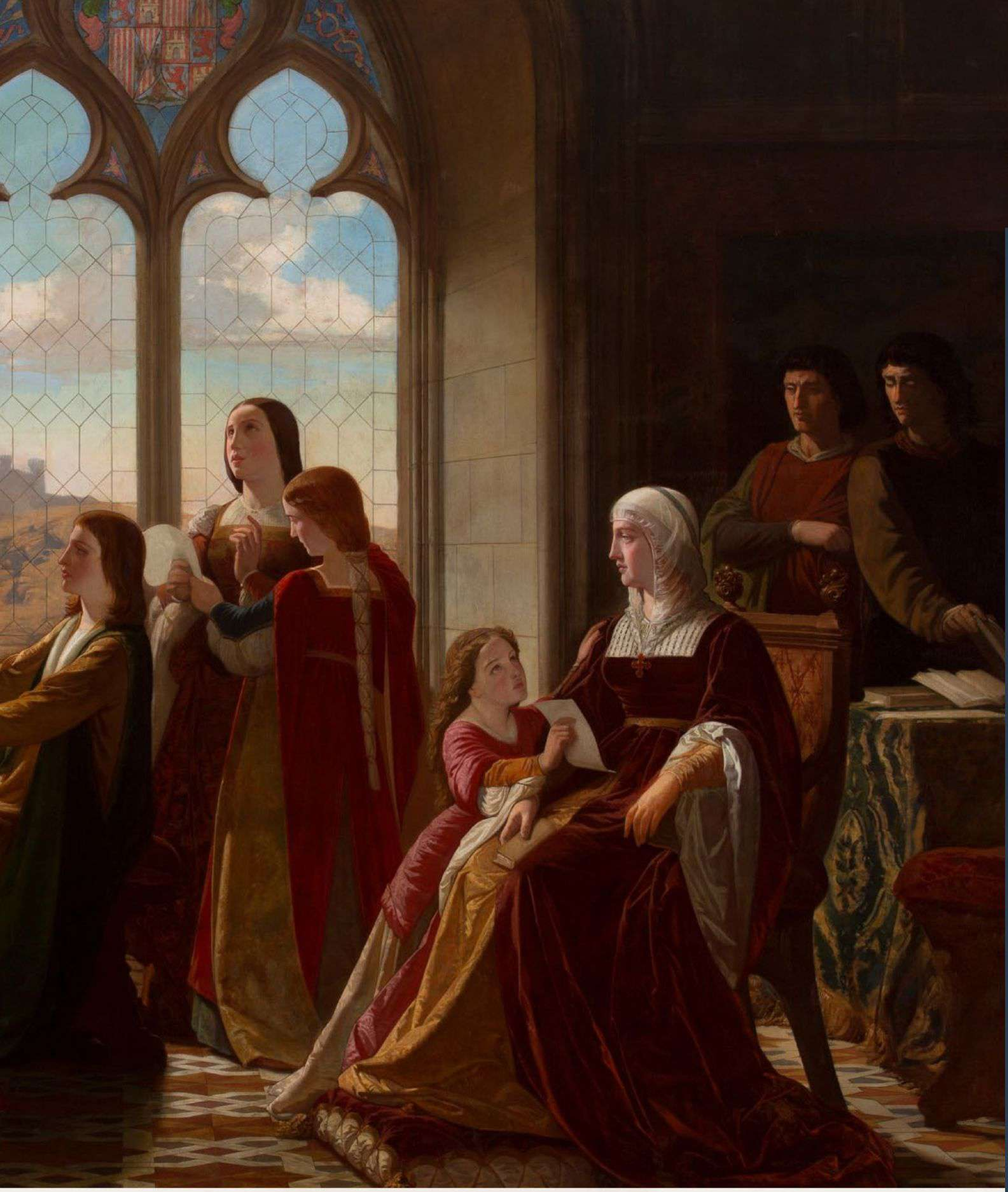
The final treaty guaranteed that Ferdinand would need her permission for just about everything he did and he wouldn't even be allowed to leave Castile without her agreement. She also extracted 100,000 florins and a ruby necklace from her father-in-law as well as an impressive military retinue in return for her hand in marriage. John of Aragon didn't care – the deal would put his son in line to reign over much of



Of Isabella and Ferdinand's seven children, five lived until adulthood



> *"She was so smitten that she shouted and pointed with unrestrained excitement"*



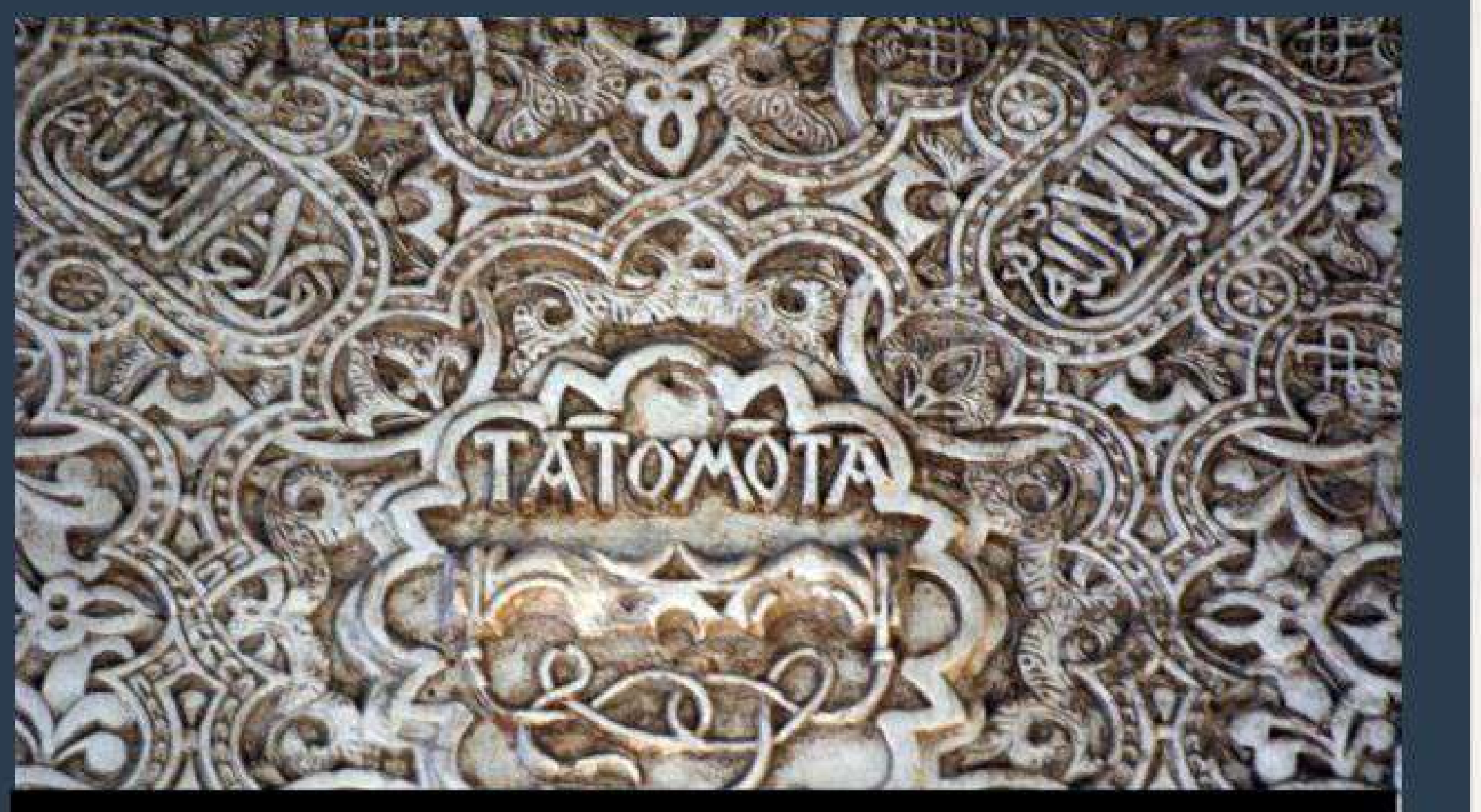
## “Tanto monta, monta tanto”

Isabella and Ferdinand’s motto, adopted at the time of their marriage, was all about equality

In the palace that Isabella and Ferdinand loved to call home, the intricate stonework bears a motto still associated with the queen and her husband. ‘Tato mota’ is carved into the walls of the Alhambra in Granada, a reminder of the powerful message of partnership that the royal couple put at the heart of their marriage.

The full motto runs ‘tanto monta, monta tanto’, meaning ‘it amounts to the same, the same it amounts to’. Later versions added ‘Isabel como Fernando’, or ‘Isabel as Ferdinand’. They chose it to show that, from the very start, they acted and ruled with joint power and authority and neither outranked the other. The phrase was originally linked to Alexander the Great and the Gordian Knot when it was used to show that cutting the knot was the same as unravelling it as both methods left it undone.

Ferdinand and Isabella made it their own. It was engraved on the great sword they used to knight Christopher Columbus in the 1490s and it featured on the royal coat of arms. Today, it can still be seen on buildings all around Spain.



**Isabella and Ferdinand’s motto, carved into the ancient stones of the Alhambra**

the Iberian peninsula. Ferdinand could also see the benefits of the union, despite the restrictions it placed on him, and he rode off to bring the ruby necklace to Isabella’s envoy himself.

Meanwhile, Henry continued negotiating possible weddings for his half-sister. As well as courting the king of Portugal, he also entertained the idea of Isabella marrying the duke of Berry, brother of King Louis XI of France, while Richard, Duke of Gloucester, brother of King Edward IV of England, was another potential match. Henry and his advisers were still convinced that Isabella would do their bidding when it came to choosing a husband, little knowing that the princess had risked everything by deciding on her own marriage.

Isabella realised how much danger she was in. As spies circled her, she headed to the city of Valladolid without fanfare and then calmly wrote to her half-brother, telling him she was ready to get married. Later letters pointed to Ferdinand as her ideal choice. However, the couple knew that their enemies wouldn’t allow them to wed without a fight and so the definite nature of their plans remained a secret. Instead, Isabella’s envoys rode out in the dark evenings of early October to meet Ferdinand in a monk’s cell in Zaragoza to tell him her whereabouts. He then pretended to be a servant, travelling in disguise to reach his bride.

By the time Ferdinand arrived in Valladolid, he had no need to hide anymore as Isabella was now speaking of him as her future husband. The couple met soon afterwards, with one legend stating that the bride was so smitten that she shouted and pointed with unrestrained excitement as her groom rode into her lodgings to meet her. They had to finalise the small print of their marriage treaty before any ceremony could take place, although it was claimed that they were only stopped from falling into each other’s arms, overcome with attraction, by the presence of the archbishop of Toledo at the meeting.

On 19 October 1469, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon married in the Palacio de los Vivero in Valladolid where the young couple had stationed themselves. The ceremony took place late in the afternoon and the newlyweds soon retired to their chamber. Isabella had seen her half-brother constantly mocked for ignoring the tradition of publicly bedding his brides. She and her new husband proudly displayed the evidence that they had consummated their marriage with the blood stained sheets from their marital bed paraded before witnesses before seven days of celebrations took over the city of Valladolid. Henry and his court could do nothing.

Isabella and Ferdinand fell deeply in love after their marriage and their devotion to one another would help turn them into one of Medieval Europe’s ultimate power couples whose reigns ultimately led to a united Spain. They remained true to their marriage treaty, with Isabella always holding as much power as her husband while their descendants would go on to rule all over Europe. The young couple who rebelled against regal rules began a path to untold power and success with their ambitious and dangerous royal wedding.

## HRE Maximilian I & Mary of Burgundy

*Mid-August 1477*

The relationship between Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy was rare for the Middle Ages – though it was a dynastic marriage, the pair fell in love. The couple began their correspondence through interpreters and when the agreement for marriage was made, Maximilian became a trendsetter as the first to give his fiancée a diamond engagement ring. As part of their wedding ceremony at Ghent, they had a wedding chariot that was steered by the figure of victory.

© Alamy

### 25 January 1533

# Henry VIII & Anne Boleyn

The controversial royal wedding that changed the course of England's future forever

**Written by June Woolerton**

They had caused a religious revolution in their quest to marry, but when Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn finally became husband and wife, they did so in secret. The couple's wedding, on 25 January 1533 in a room above the Holbein Gate at Whitehall Palace, was witnessed by just a handful of people and there were no celebrations afterwards. It may even have been the second secret wedding ceremony Henry and Anne had gone through, for while the pair had decided that nothing could stop their union, there was a very good reason that they kept their wedding to themselves. On the day they made their vows, Henry was still officially married to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

The king's first wife had been an inconvenient stumbling block from the moment Henry and Anne decided to marry over five years earlier. Catherine's refusal to agree to an annulment had dismayed then angered Henry, a monarch who was used to getting his own way. Anne had a personality every bit as powerful as that of her future husband but even so, neither could have foreseen the battle they would face to wed when they first fell in love.

Exactly when that was is hard to pin down - Henry and Anne were good at keeping secrets. However, the king's surviving love letters to her suggest the attraction was serious, at least for him, as early as 1526. By then she was a rising star at court, having returned to England after spending her formative years on the continent.

Born at some point between 1501 and 1507, Anne had spent her early years as lady-in-waiting to a series of royal ladies in Europe. A long stint at the French court had introduced her to sophisticated thinking and fashion, which she made her calling card when she returned to England. Her dark hair and eyes, as well as her charm and personality, soon saw men trying to court her.

Her lively wit and expertise at the game of courtly love is believed to have been instrumental in Henry's attraction to her. By the time he fell in love, the king was in his mid 30s and had reigned for over 15 years. He had built a reputation for wise government, military prowess and a love of learning, but he was also known as a romantic. In the early years, he had showered Catherine with affection even though their marriage had been a politically useful alliance. He had also had a string of mistresses, including Anne's sister, Mary. However, when Henry set his sights on Anne, she refused to follow her sister's lead and rebuffed all attempts by the king to make her his lover.

This only deepened Henry's passion for her and his surviving letters are filled with desire. In the earliest, written in May 1527, he tells Anne he has "been for above a whole year stricken with the dart of love", while in a later letter he writes "my heart and I surrender ourselves into your hands", signing himself "your loyal servant, H.R." He tells Anne that "wherever I am, I am yours", while another note is decorated with hearts containing his love's initials, AB, interspersed with his own name.

Anne still refused to become his mistress and soon they had agreed to marry. But while the couple's relationship was filled with passion, it was also a matter of politics. By the time Anne won his heart, Henry had already given serious thought to

A Victorian imagining of the first meeting between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, which happened around 1526

> "The couple couldn't keep their secret forever - Anne was now pregnant"

ending his marriage to Catherine. The couple had just one surviving child, a daughter named Mary, and the queen was approaching 40 and unlikely to have more babies. Henry began to ask whether his union was really valid as Catherine had previously been married to his older brother, Arthur. The queen maintained that relationship had never been consummated but Henry, with his deep knowledge of the Bible, became fixated on the Old Testament Book of Leviticus which said if a man married his brother's wife, they would be childless.

In 1527, Henry sought a papal annulment to his marriage but soon afterwards the pope, Clement VII, became a prisoner of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who just happened to be Catherine's nephew. Henry's chief minister, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, began looking for other solutions and established a special court to examine the validity of Henry's marriage to Catherine with both king and queen commanded to appear before it. Catherine made a dramatic plea to her husband to put aside attempts to end their marriage, winning a lot of sympathy in the process. Unfortunately for Henry, a papal legate sent from Rome especially for the hearing held proceedings up and the annulment failed to materialise.

'The King's Great Matter', as Henry's attempts to scratch his first marriage from the history books was known, continued to rumble on while Anne became an increasingly visible and important part of his life. By 1531, Henry had broken contact with Catherine, who was conspicuously absent from that year's Christmas celebrations. Eustace Chapuys, Charles V's ambassador to England, noted soon afterwards that Anne was now staying in the chambers that had once been used by the queen. On 1 September 1532, Henry made Anne marquess of Pembroke, the first time a woman had been elevated to the peerage in her own right. In October, she accompanied Henry to Calais where the King of France, Francis I, talked and danced with her. It was a public recognition of her status as Henry's partner and now the couple made marriage their priority.

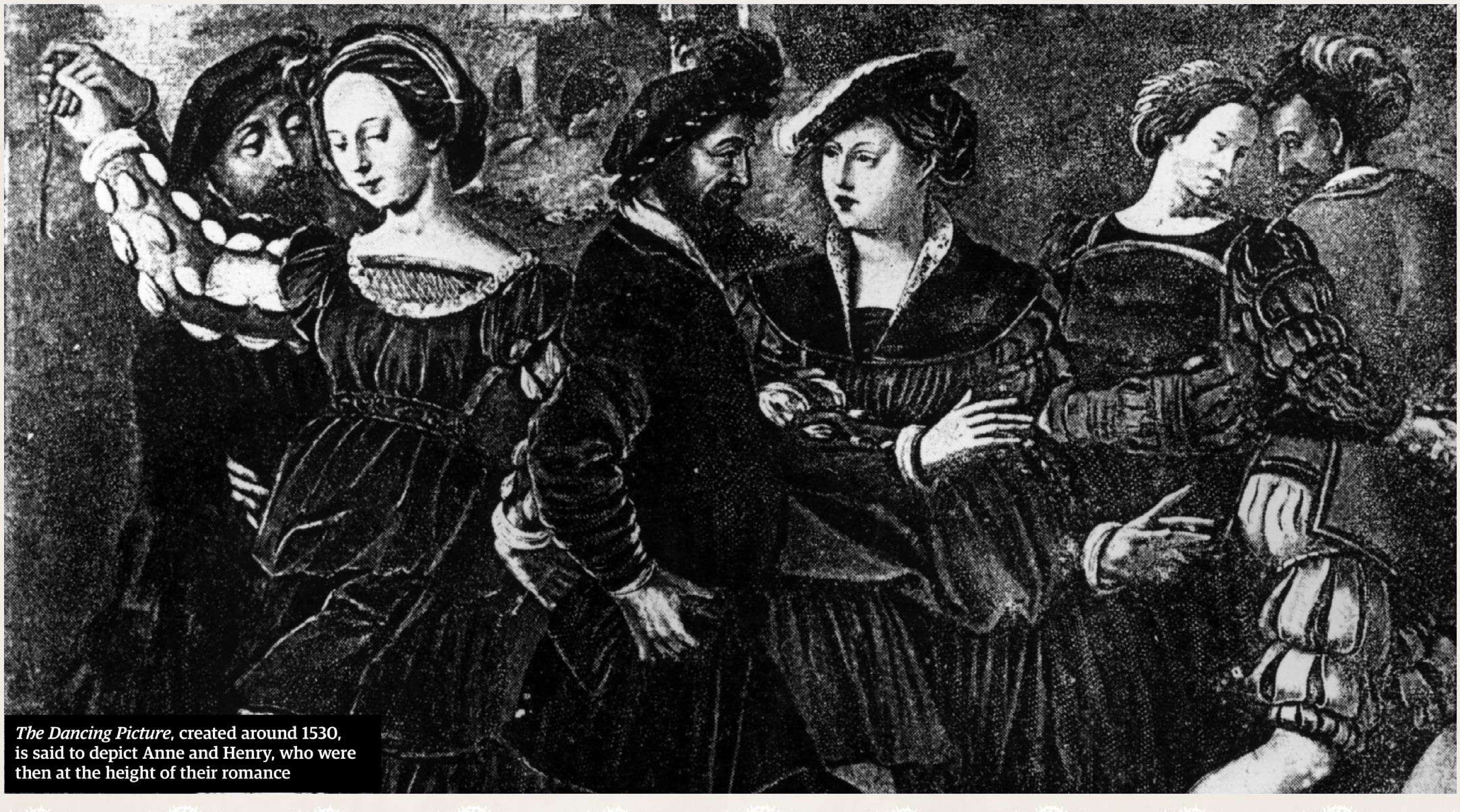
Some contemporaries, including the chronicler Edward Hall, believed that Henry and Anne were married or made some kind of formal commitment to each other on their return from Calais in November 1532. The couple began to sleep together around this time and Henry's determination to have a male heir meant that any pregnancy needed to result in a legitimate birth. The secret marriage Henry and Anne underwent on 25 January 1533 was out of necessity as well as desire.

The ceremony itself was very simple. Both promised "have and to hold, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer", while Tudor brides traditionally vowed to "be bonny and buxom in bed and board". While very few details of the actual ceremony survive, we do know that the bare minimum number of witnesses were invited with the royal chaplain, Rowland Lee, the most likely priest to officiate. However, there was no legal requirement to record the wedding in a register, so Henry and Anne could cover their tracks while they worked out what to do about Catherine.

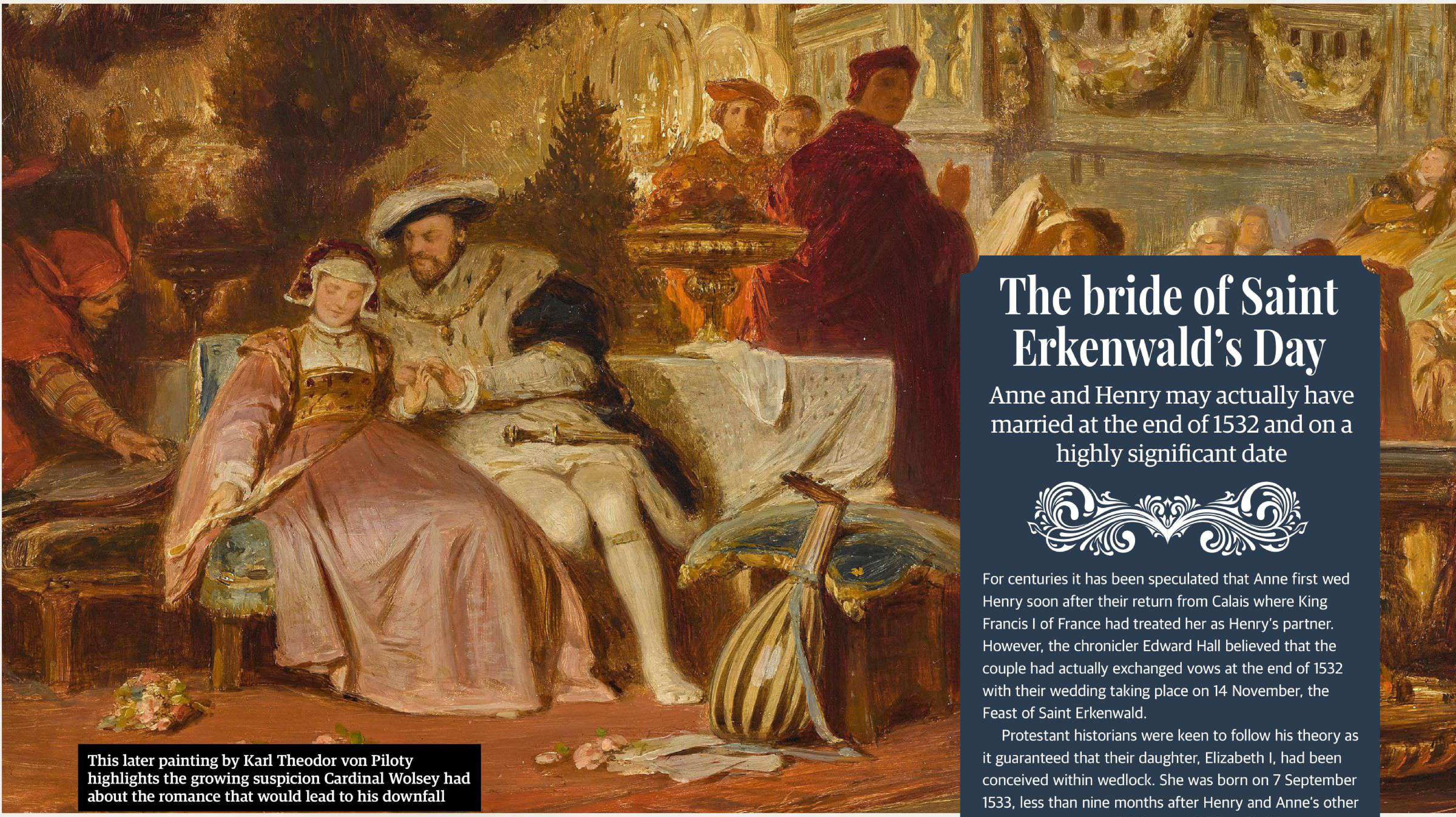
Rumours soon began to fly about a possible marriage and while the king and his bride said nothing, their actions began to betray the truth. At a royal banquet for foreign ambassadors, Anne took the seat usually occupied by the queen. Meanwhile, at Easter, she attended Mass wearing cloth of gold that could only be worn by royalty under laws devised by the king's own father, Henry VII. But the couple couldn't keep their secret forever - Anne was now pregnant.

However, Henry had since put aside any plans to get the pope to help him end his marriage and some saw Anne as instrumental in that. She had shown an interest in the religious reform sweeping through Europe and Henry, partly through his desperation for an annulment, began to examine them, too. It was later claimed that Anne had given her husband a copy of William Tyndale's *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, a text that suggested a king was head of his country's church. Whether that is true or not, by 1533 Henry was convinced that he didn't need the authority of the pope to resolve his marital problems.

His new archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, agreed and on 10 May 1533 he set up a new court that took less than a fortnight to decide



***The Dancing Picture*, created around 1530, is said to depict Anne and Henry, who were then at the height of their romance**

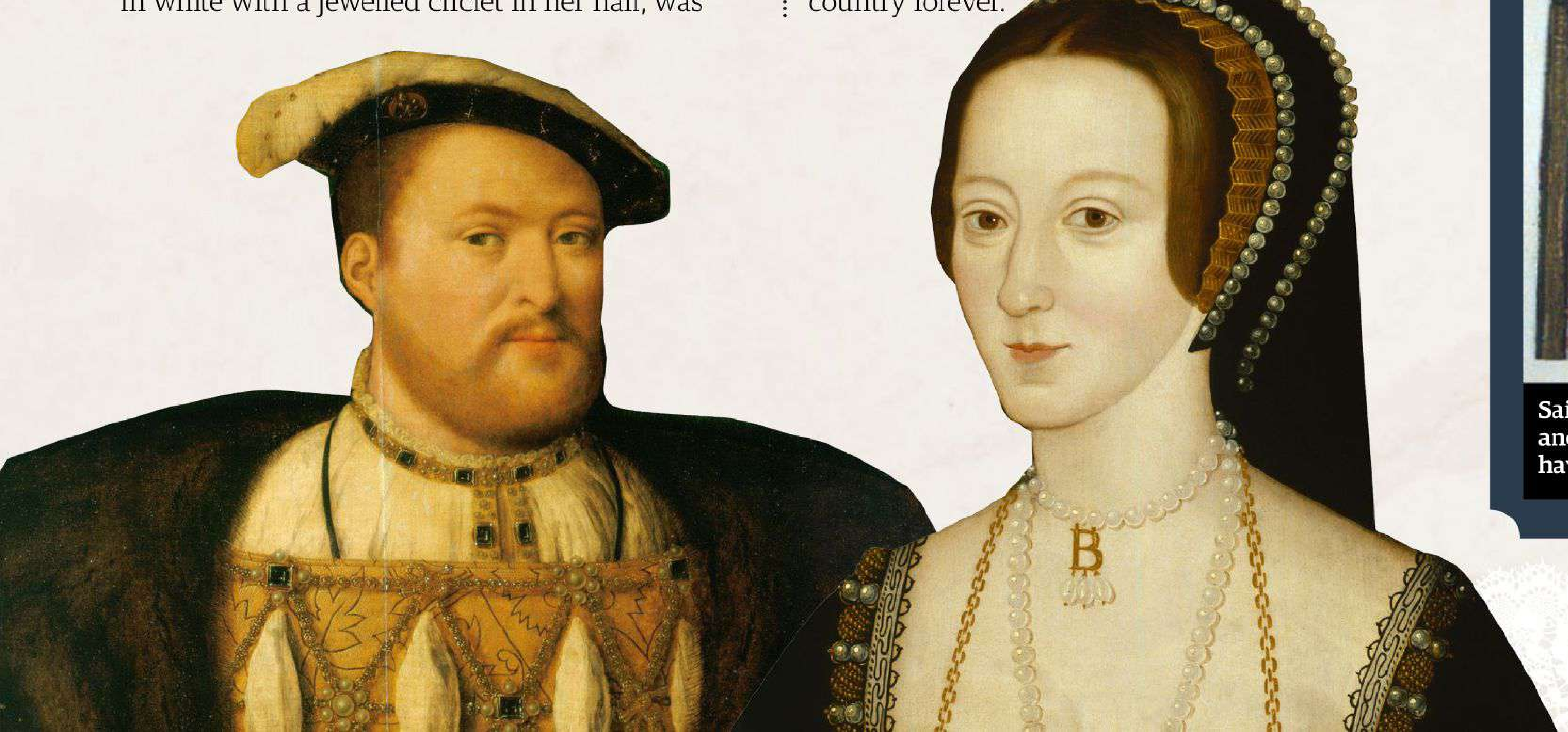


This later painting by Karl Theodor von Piloty highlights the growing suspicion Cardinal Wolsey had about the romance that would lead to his downfall

that Henry and Catherine's wedding was invalid. This meant that the king's marriage to Anne was his only legal union. The ultimate confirmation from Henry himself came at the end of May as he wrote to the mayor of London, Sir Stephen Peacock, telling him "his pleasure was to… celebrate the coronation of his most dear and well beloved wife, Queen Anne".

Anne didn't need a public royal wedding – the spectacular celebrations planned for her coronation would instead be the confirmation of her new status as wife of the king. On 29 May 1533, she arrived at the Tower of London in a flotilla of 50 barges headed by a representation of a fire-breathing dragon. On 31 May, Queen Anne, dressed in white with a jewelled circlet in her hair, was carried through the crimson-draped streets of London on a litter covered by a canopy of cloth of gold. She was entertained by pageants laid on in her honour while fountains in the street ran with wine. On the following day, 1 June, she walked into Westminster Abbey wearing royal purple where Cranmer placed Saint Edward's Crown, until then only used for the coronation of the monarch, firmly on her head.

Anne's place as queen was now finally secure after years of waiting. And it had been sealed initially in a wedding in a dark room on a frosty morning, the unceremonious pinnacle of a royal romance that had changed the monarchy, the Church and the country forever.



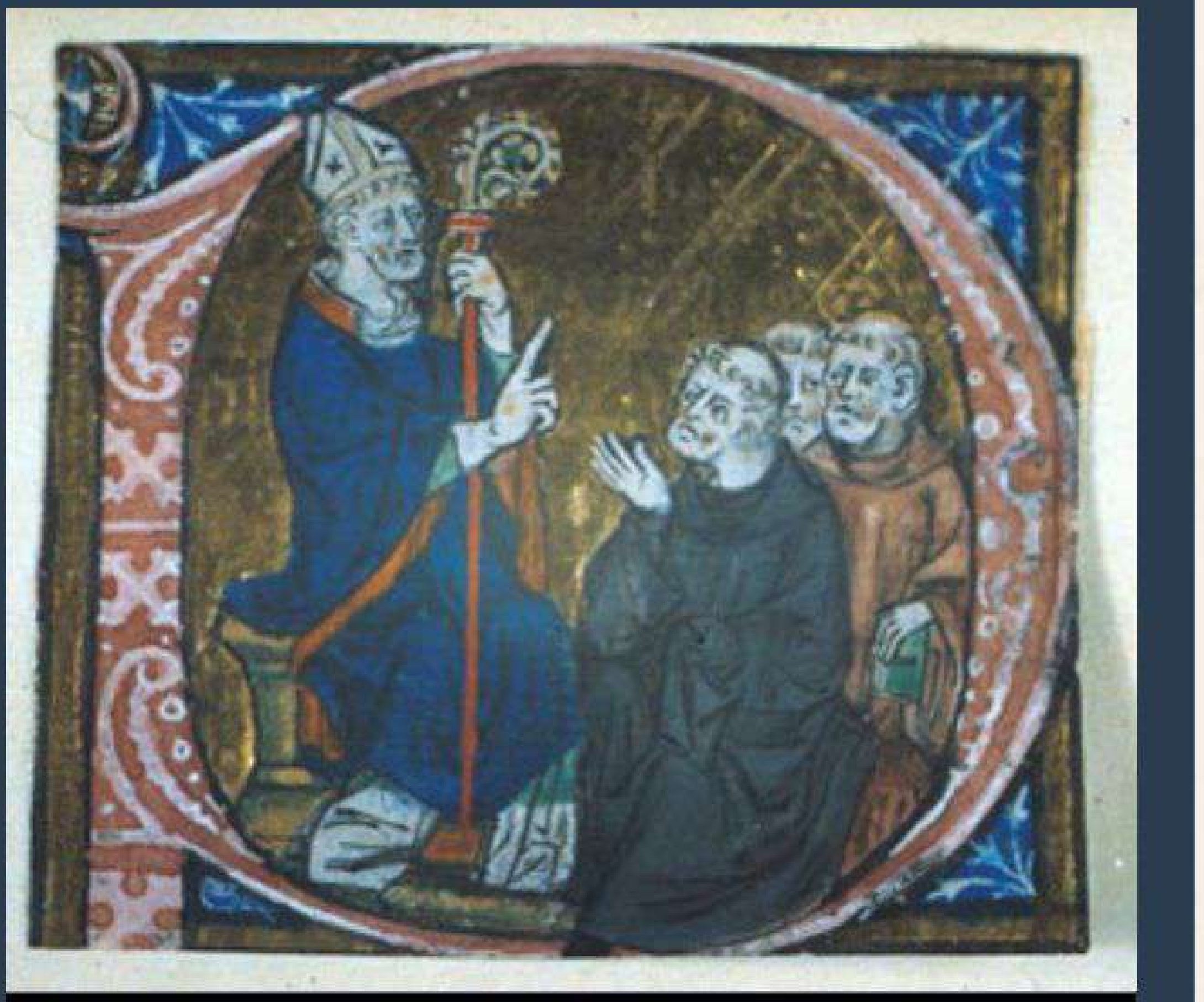
## The bride of Saint Erkenwald's Day

### Anne and Henry may actually have married at the end of 1532 and on a highly significant date

For centuries it has been speculated that Anne first wed Henry soon after their return from Calais where King Francis I of France had treated her as Henry's partner. However, the chronicler Edward Hall believed that the couple had actually exchanged vows at the end of 1532 with their wedding taking place on 14 November, the Feast of Saint Erkenwald.

Protestant historians were keen to follow his theory as it guaranteed that their daughter, Elizabeth I, had been conceived within wedlock. She was born on 7 September 1533, less than nine months after Henry and Anne's other secret ceremony on 25 January 1533, and a November wedding would remove any shadow of doubt about her right to the throne.

But 14 November was a significant for another reason – on that date in 1501, Catherine of Aragon had married Henry's older brother, Arthur, in a ceremony at Old Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. It was this union that had convinced Henry that his own marriage to the Spanish princess was invalid so any possible wedding on the anniversary would have carried special meaning for him. However, with no written records, it is impossible to know whether Anne, like Catherine before her, had been a bride on Saint Erkenwald's Day.



Saint Erkenwald was a popular Medieval saint, and Henry and Anne were believed by some to have actually married on his feast day in 1532

© WIKI; Getty; Thinkstock

## Mary I of England & Philip II of Spain

*25 July 1554*

It was the ultimate Catholic wedding. Wed in Winchester Cathedral after having met in person only two days before, Mary and Philip were proclaimed man and wife at a wedding mass that was conducted in French, Spanish and Latin. Taking place at a time when Mary had switched the state religion back to Catholicism, security was high as there had been some anger in the country over the religion of the groom.

© Alamy

24 April 1558

# Mary, Queen of Scots & Dauphin Francis

The Queen of Scots' long-awaited marriage to the heir of France may have been glittering, but beneath the opulence lurked a dirty secret

**Written by Melanie Clegg**

Although the 16th century is a period remarkable for the amount of charismatic monarchs and consorts it produced, few have quite the same romantic allure as Mary, Queen of Scots, who succeeded her father James V as Queen of Scotland when just six days old. Mary Stuart's career, her devastating fall from power and subsequent exile have attracted a lot of attention, not all of it sympathetic, not least because it serves as a means to highlight the odds stacked against even the most powerful women during this time.

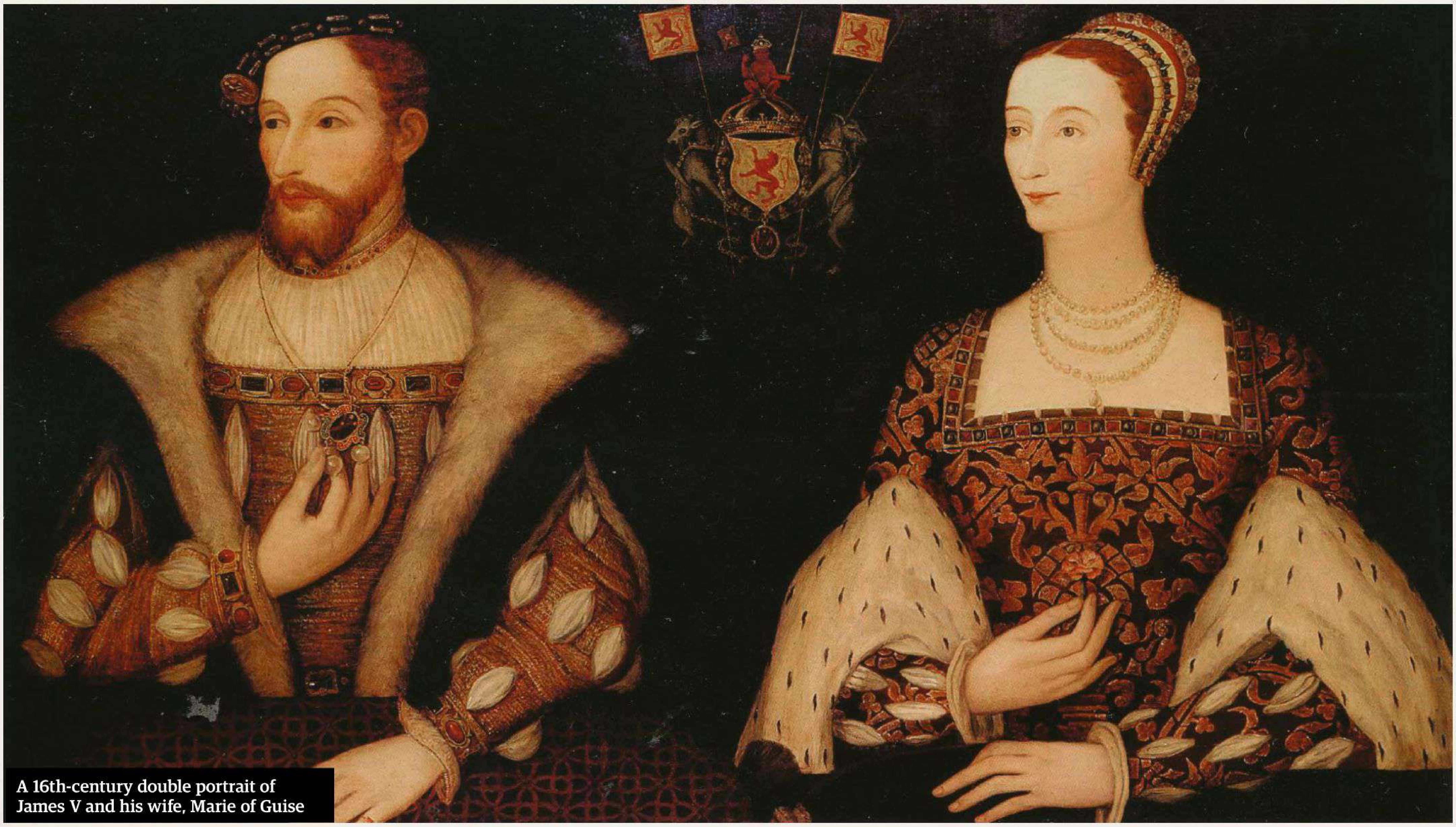
In contrast to the almost 19 years that she spent in English captivity, Mary's period of personal rule in Scotland was relatively brief. Spanning the six years between her return in August 1561 and her abdication in July 1567, it became increasingly chaotic with each passing year as the reins of power slipped from her hands. Before all of this, however, Mary's star shined very brightly indeed and never more so than on the occasion of her marriage to Francis, Dauphin of France. With Henry VIII as a common enemy, it made sense for Scotland and France to continue their Auld Alliance against the English. Matters became even more urgent when Henry ramped up hostilities against the Scots in order to force them to hand over their young queen so that she could be raised at his court in England and eventually married to his heir, Edward, Prince of Wales. In a desperate attempt to buy some time, Marie de Guise publicly let it be known that she favoured the English match while secretly assuring Francis I that she had no intention of letting her daughter fall into English hands. It was her ultimate goal that Mary should eventually unite the thrones of France and Scotland by marrying Francis I's eldest grandson, who was two years younger than her daughter.

When Henry VIII died in January 1547 and was succeeded by his son, Edward, the issue became even more pressing. The young king's uncle and protector, the Earl of Somerset, led an invading army over the border, intending to occupy Scotland, subdue its people and seize Queen Mary. Alarmed, Marie de Guise sent her daughter away and hastily negotiated with the new French king, Henry II, promising him Mary could be raised in the French royal nurseries in exchange for a much-needed injection of French troops and military equipment, which would be used to remove the English from Scotland once and for all.

It was a serious wrench for Marie de Guise to send her only daughter away to France, but she knew it was a sacrifice that had to be made in order to ensure the safety of the young queen and security of her country. The Scots lords may have grumbled about their nation becoming an effective chattel of the French, but the more pragmatic among them recognised that it was far better to be friends with France than find themselves overrun with the English and, worse still, governed by the English king – a fate that they had proudly and narrowly managed to avoid for several centuries.

Mary, newly formally betrothed to the French dauphin, embarked for France at the end of July 1548 and would not return to her native Scotland for 13 years. Upon her arrival at the French court, she was welcomed with open arms by Henry II, although his wife, Catherine de' Medici, was rather

Marie R



A 16th-century double portrait of James V and his wife, Marie of Guise

more reserved when it came to the little Scottish queen. The two would never enjoy a particularly warm relationship. Naturally everyone was keen to see how Mary got on with the dauphin, and to Henry's great relief, the two became great friends, with Francis quickly developing a childish crush on the vibrant and charming Mary, who was a pretty child with auburn hair, hazel eyes and a porcelain complexion. It was his sister, Elisabeth, who would become her best friend though, and the two girls shared a bedchamber and their lessons for most of their childhood.

While her mother battled with the recalcitrant Scots and the ever-constant threat of English invasion, Mary enjoyed an idyllic childhood at the French royal palaces, where her rank and personal charm meant she swiftly became rather spoilt and inevitably grew up with a very high opinion of herself, expecting adoration and applause at all times. Although she was never allowed to forget that she was an anointed queen in her own right, she was nonetheless encouraged to think of herself as more French than Scottish and tutored in the French language as well as other essential skills such as dancing, music, poetry and riding. There were other equally important but less formal lessons to be learned at the French court, and it was probably under the tutelage of Henry II's mistress, Diane de Poitiers, that Mary learned how to use the charms she had been naturally blessed with to get her own way. She would later discover, however, that not all men were apt to be rendered completely helpless by one of her winsome smiles.

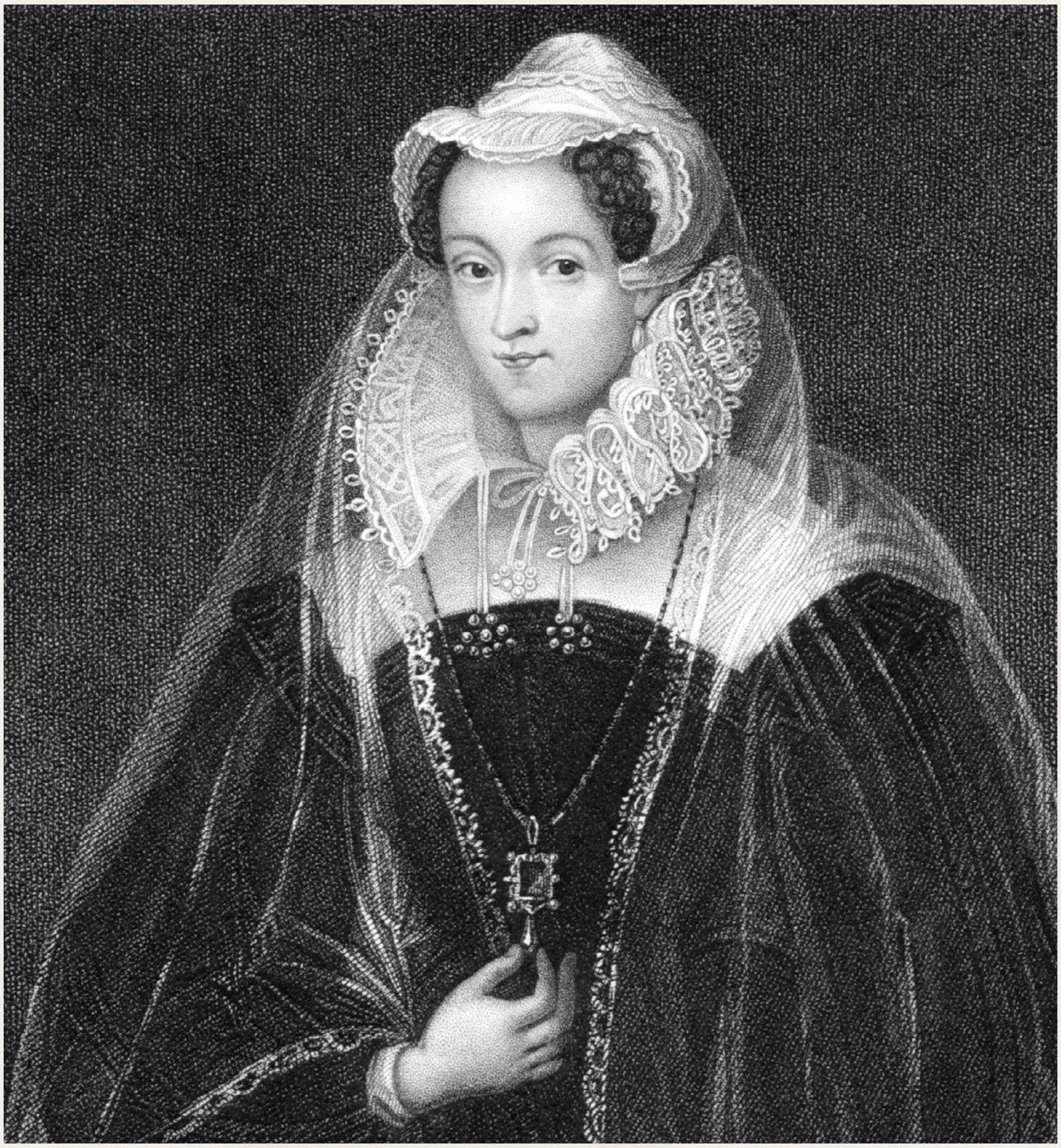
> “The young Queen of Scots looked radiant with happiness and drew all focus in a gown of shimmering white silk”

While Mary's Scottish subjects regarded the forthcoming match with some misgiving, understandably worried that they would become powerless chattels of the French, her French relatives were overjoyed at the prospect of seeing her on the throne. Her mother was the eldest daughter of Claude de Guise, a younger brother of the Duc de Lorraine and a man of great integrity who had risen to prominence at court and a dukedom of his own thanks to his friendship with Francis I and several daring acts of military prowess during the Italian Wars. It was not for nothing that the Guise-Lorraine family motto was 'All for one and one for all' (later famously adopted by Dumas' musketeers), for to this close-knit and ambitious clan, family was everything and they would stop at nothing to place themselves and their relatives in positions of power.

The marriage of Marie de Guise to King James V of Scotland in 1538 had been the Guise-Lorraine family's greatest coup to date and considerably boosted the family's fortunes and influence, but now, 20 years later, they were about to achieve an even grander match for Mary, and they were delighted at the prospect.

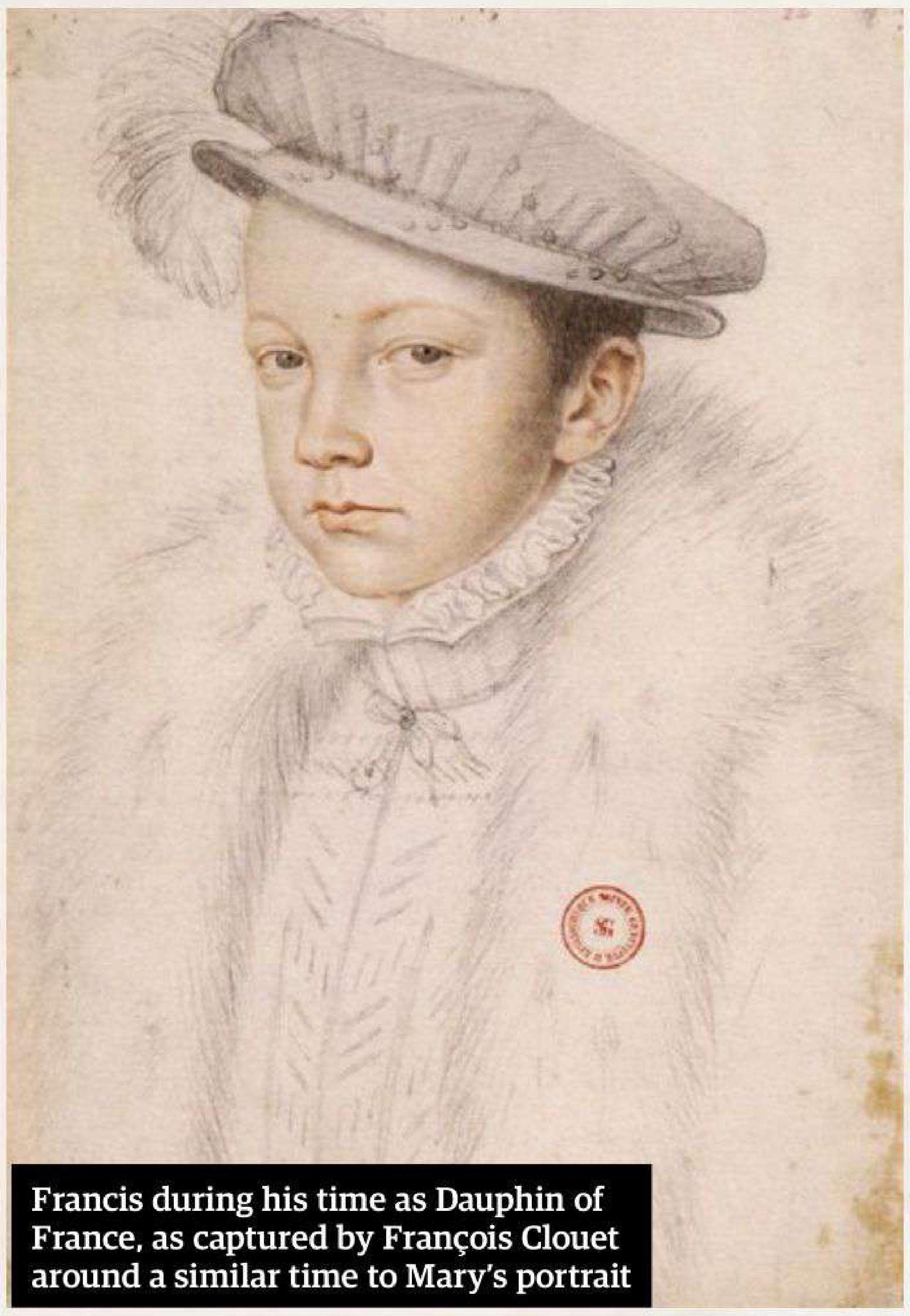
Mary's most prominent Guise uncles, Francis, Duc de Guise, and Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine, were particularly gleeful about the fact that their niece was about to become Dauphine of France and caused quite a few hackles to rise at court by throwing their weight around and demanding extra honours for both Mary and themselves in order to reflect her new status. It was at their insistence that Mary was given her own separate household, which was run along ruinously expensive lines – all funded by Marie de Guise, who had to draw upon her own limited resources to keep her daughter in style. More dangerously though, the brothers made no secret of the fact that their ultimate goal was to see Mary and Francis on the English throne, arguing that should Queen Mary I die without an heir, their niece's claim was far superior to that of Mary's half-sister, Elizabeth, and ignoring the fact that Henry VIII's will had excluded the Stuart descendants of his sister from the succession.

The marriage was formally announced in the great hall of the Louvre palace on 19 April 1558. Mary was just 15 years old while her fiancé was 14, and they must have made an odd couple as they appeared before the courtiers to have their hands



joined by the Cardinal de Lorraine before making their vows and exchanging rings to formalise the betrothal. Mary was already unusually tall for her age, having inherited the willowy physique of her mother, and glowed with health and vitality, while in contrast, Francis was abnormally short, pasty complexioned, sullen and awkward. Their devotion to each other was obvious, however, and did much to compensate for their obvious physical disparity.

The wedding itself took place less than a week later on Sunday 24 April and was an expensive extravaganza designed to flaunt the unprecedented importance of this match between a dauphin of France and the reigning monarch of another nation. This would bring the long-desired crown of England finally within the grasp of the French should they be bold enough to reach out and take it. Mary spent the night before her wedding in the palace of the Bishop of Paris, and from there the wedding procession walked the short distance to Notre Dame, protected from any rain by an ornately decorated covered walkway that led to a 12-foot-high stage in front of the cathedral's west front. Everything was designed to ensure the royal party, in particular the bride and groom, were visible at all



**Francis during his time as Dauphin of France, as captured by François Clouet around a similar time to Mary's portrait**

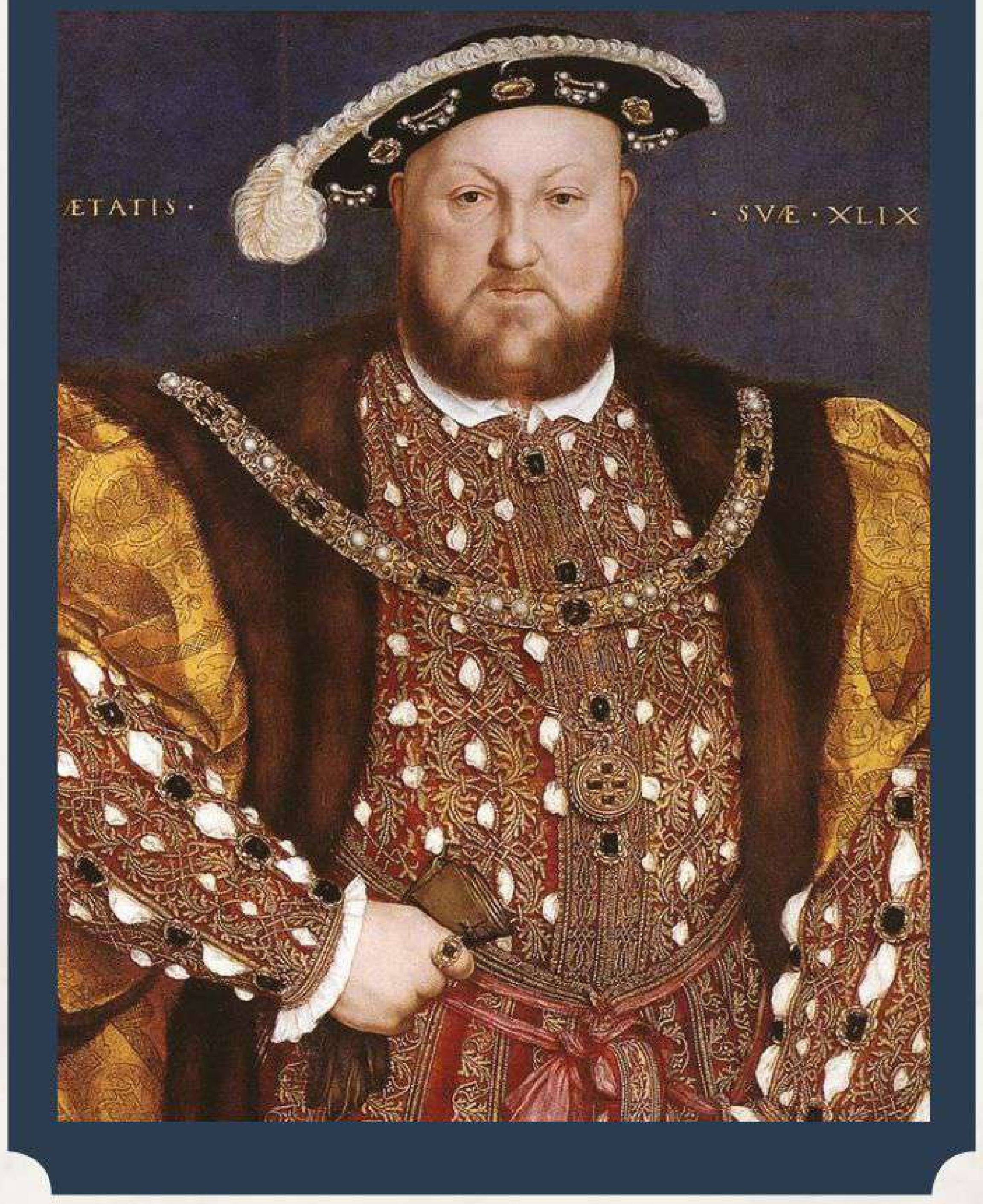
## Stuarts versus Tudors

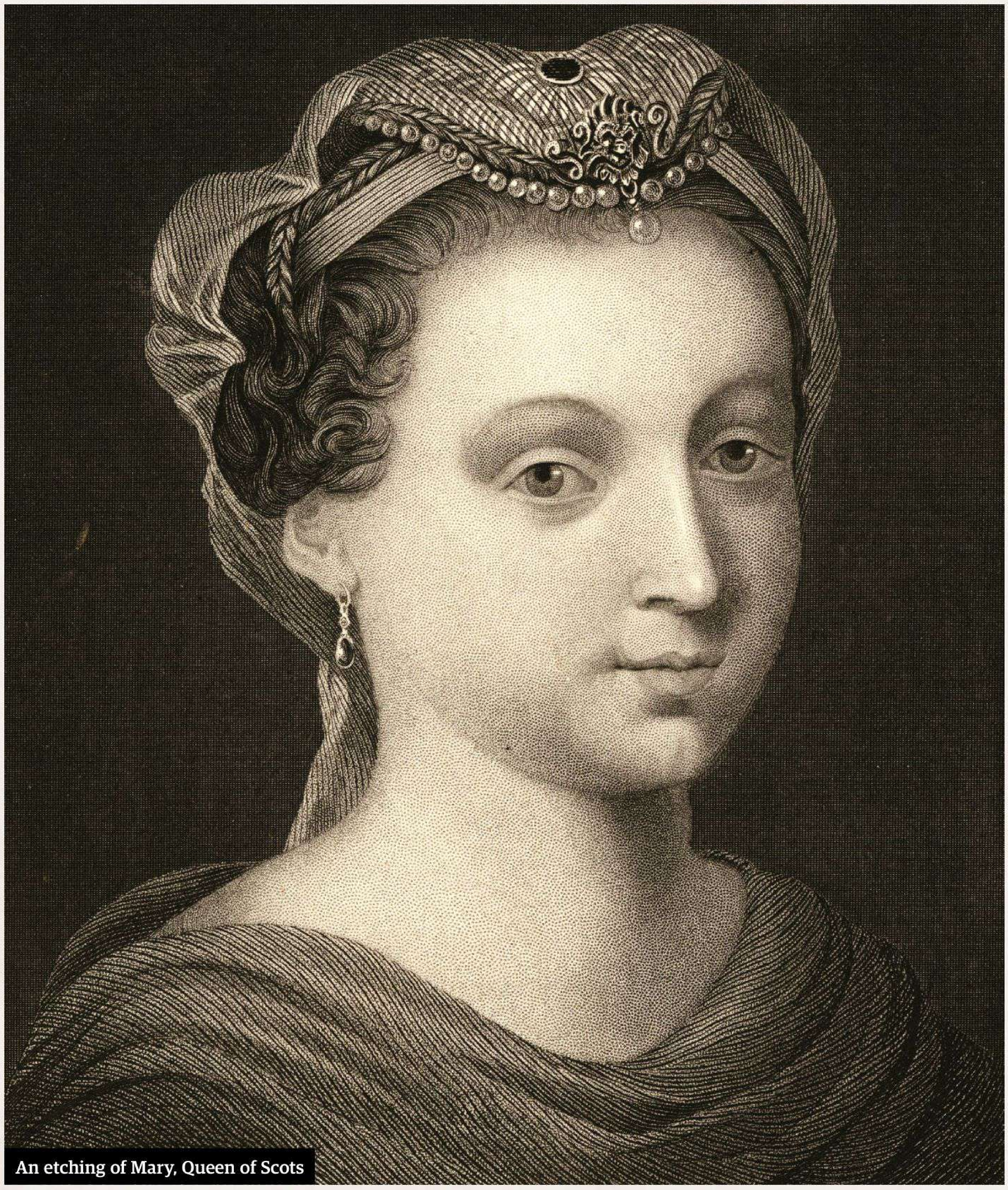
### After centuries of feuding, the ever-strong bitterness between the Scottish and English thrones remained strong

The ongoing feud between the rulers of Scotland and England rumbled on for several centuries but reached its peak during the 16th century during the reign of Henry VIII. The marriage of his elder sister Margaret Tudor to the Scottish King James IV in 1503 was intended to seal the Treaty of Perpetual Peace between the two nations, who had been at loggerheads for almost 200 years, but had fallen apart within ten years when James, albeit unwillingly at the behest of his French allies, went to war against the English in 1513. The death of James in that year's Battle of Flodden only served to intensify hostilities between the two nations and their ruling houses, the Tudors and the Stuarts. Although the new king of Scotland, James V was the nephew of Henry VIII, the two monarchs failed to see eye to eye and when James took the French princess Madeleine of Valois as his bride, cementing the Auld Alliance between Scotland and England's other great enemy, France, Henry was furious.

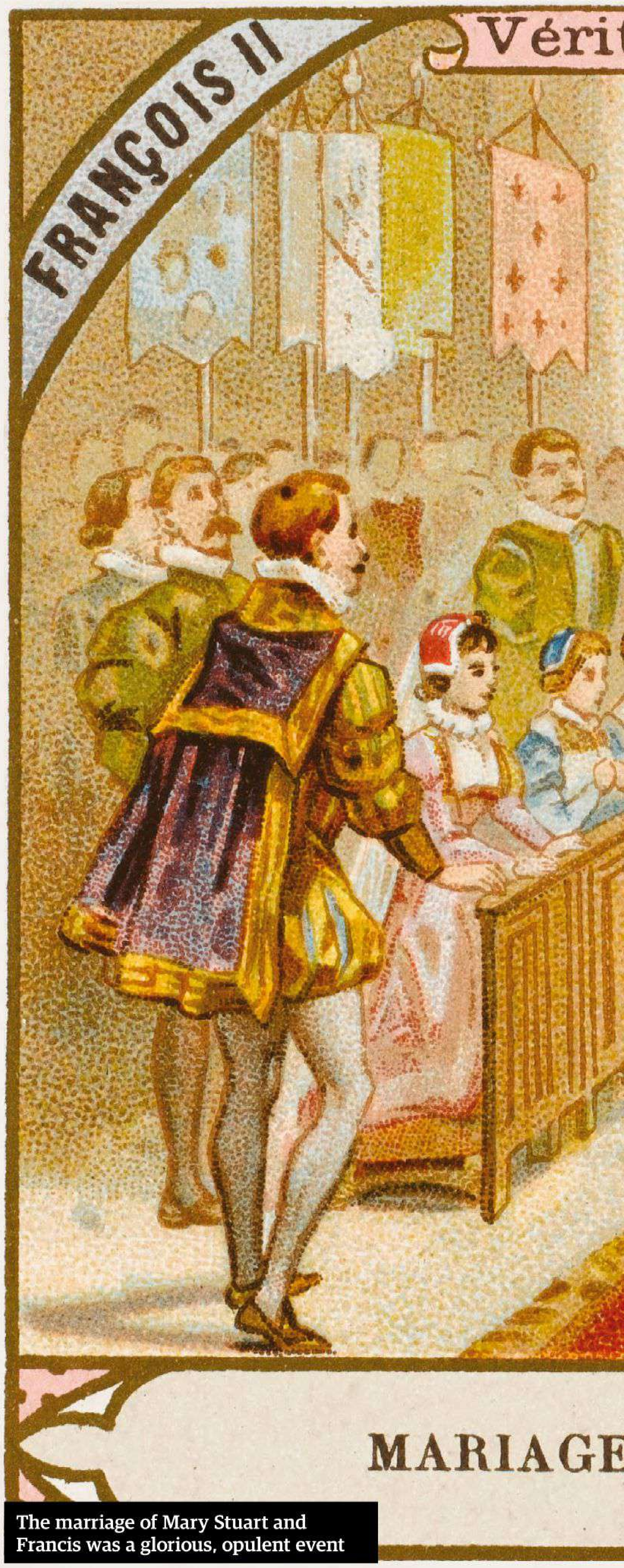
When Madeleine died after just a few months of marriage and James made overtures to French noblewoman Marie de Guise, Henry, who was envious of his nephew's youth and good looks, was so annoyed that he attempted to marry Marie himself in order to spitefully scupper both James's match and also the alliance between Scotland and France.

Luckily for Marie, the Scottish marriage went ahead, but Henry would remain a thorn in her side for several years to come after James V suddenly died of illness after losing a battle against his English uncle's forces in December 1542, leaving his infant daughter Mary to inherit the throne as queen of Scotland.





An etching of Mary, Queen of Scots



The marriage of Mary Stuart and Francis was a glorious, opulent event

times – to the delight of the enormous crowd that had gathered in order to see them go past.

The festivities began at ten in the morning when the King's Swiss guards emerged, followed by Mary's uncle Francis, Duc de Guise, who had been appointed grand master of the king's household for the day and was acting as master of ceremonies. It was at his signal that the king's musicians began to play as the gentlemen of the royal household, princes of the blood and then princes of the church, bearing crucifixes and holy relics, made their way to the stage, which was festooned with blue silk embroidered with gold fleurs-de-lys. Last to appear were the royal party, their jewels gleaming in the spring sunshine, with the groom walking with his younger brothers Charles and Henry while behind him his blushing, beautiful bride was escorted by his father and her cousin, the Duc de Lorraine.

The young queen looked radiant with happiness and drew all focus in a gown of shimmering white silk encrusted with pearls and diamonds and trailing a long dove grey velvet train, which was carried by two young maids of honour. Beneath a richly ornamented crown, her long red hair flowed unbound down her back, while around her neck there hung the spectacular Great Harry pendant, a wedding gift from her doting father-in-law.

Mary's choice of a white wedding dress was a bold move at a time when white was traditionally worn by widowed queens of France, and the fact that she would undoubtedly have been aware of this suggests that even at this stage, when she is commonly described as being entirely under the thumb of her uncles, Mary knew her own mind and was quite capable of getting her own way if she so chose. Traditionally, royal French brides wore rich crimsons, purples and cloth of gold to reflect their exalted status, but Mary knew that her colouring would be better enhanced by pure white – a colour that a more mature woman could not pull off but that only served to accentuate her youthful beauty.

> *“Francis didn't seem to mind at all that most of the enthusiasm was directed at his bride”*

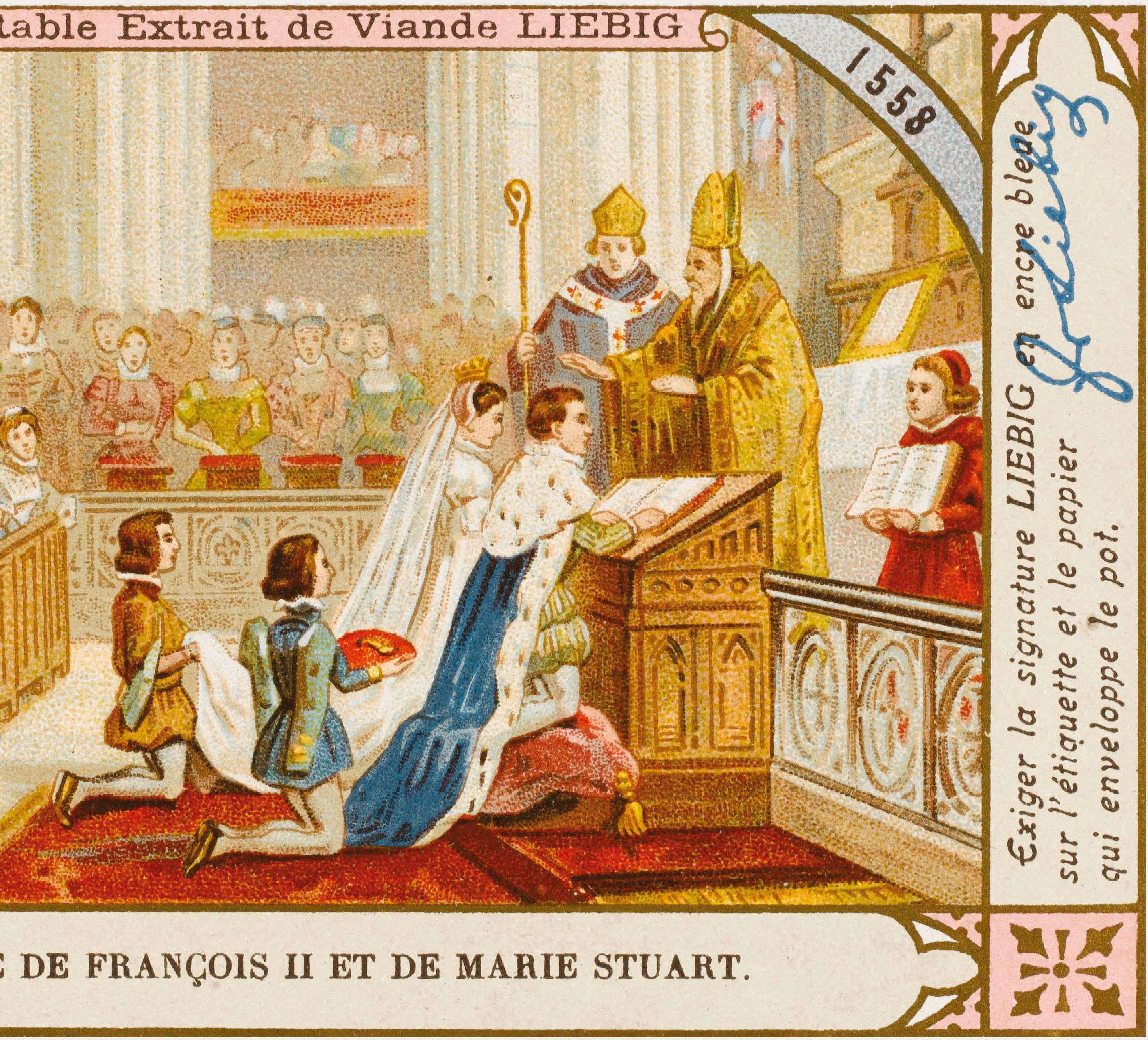


table Extrait de Viande LIEBIG
1558
Exiger la signature LIEBIG en encre bleue sur l'étiquette et le papier qui enveloppe le pot.
E DE FRANÇOIS II ET DE MARIE STUART.

As was traditional, the young couple were married on the podium outside the cathedral so that the crowd were able to watch as the Cardinal-Archbishop of Rouen performed the ceremony and Francis pushed a ring taken from his father's own hand onto his bride's finger. Not wishing anyone to miss his family's triumph, the Duc de Guise, who was always keen to court the approval of the populace even if it harmed his popularity at court, insisted the heralds should hustle the guests off the stage and into the church, leaving only the main participants in plain view, much to the crowd's delight. He then, as the royal party made their way in to the cathedral, ordered the heralds to shout "largesse" and begin hurling a vast quantity of gold and silver coins into the crowd, causing a riot as they surged forward to help themselves. Several people fainted in the crush and it was a miracle that no one died before Guise was persuaded to halt his generosity.

Meanwhile, mercifully unaware of the chaos outside, Mary and Francis processed to the royal closet in the chancel where they knelt on cloth of gold cushions to receive the sacrament then watched the Bishop of Paris perform the nuptial mass. There was more dispensing of coins during the offertory, this time to the guests who presumably behaved with rather more decorum than the crowd outside. Once the religious formalities had been completed, the newlyweds left the candlelit gloom of the great cathedral then, at the behest of King Henry, made another circuit of the stage so that everyone could see them and they could acknowledge the cheers of the crowd. Like many a male royal consort before and since, Francis didn't seem to mind at all that most of the enthusiasm was directed at his bride.

They then returned to the Bishop's Palace for a banquet in the magnificently decorated great hall.

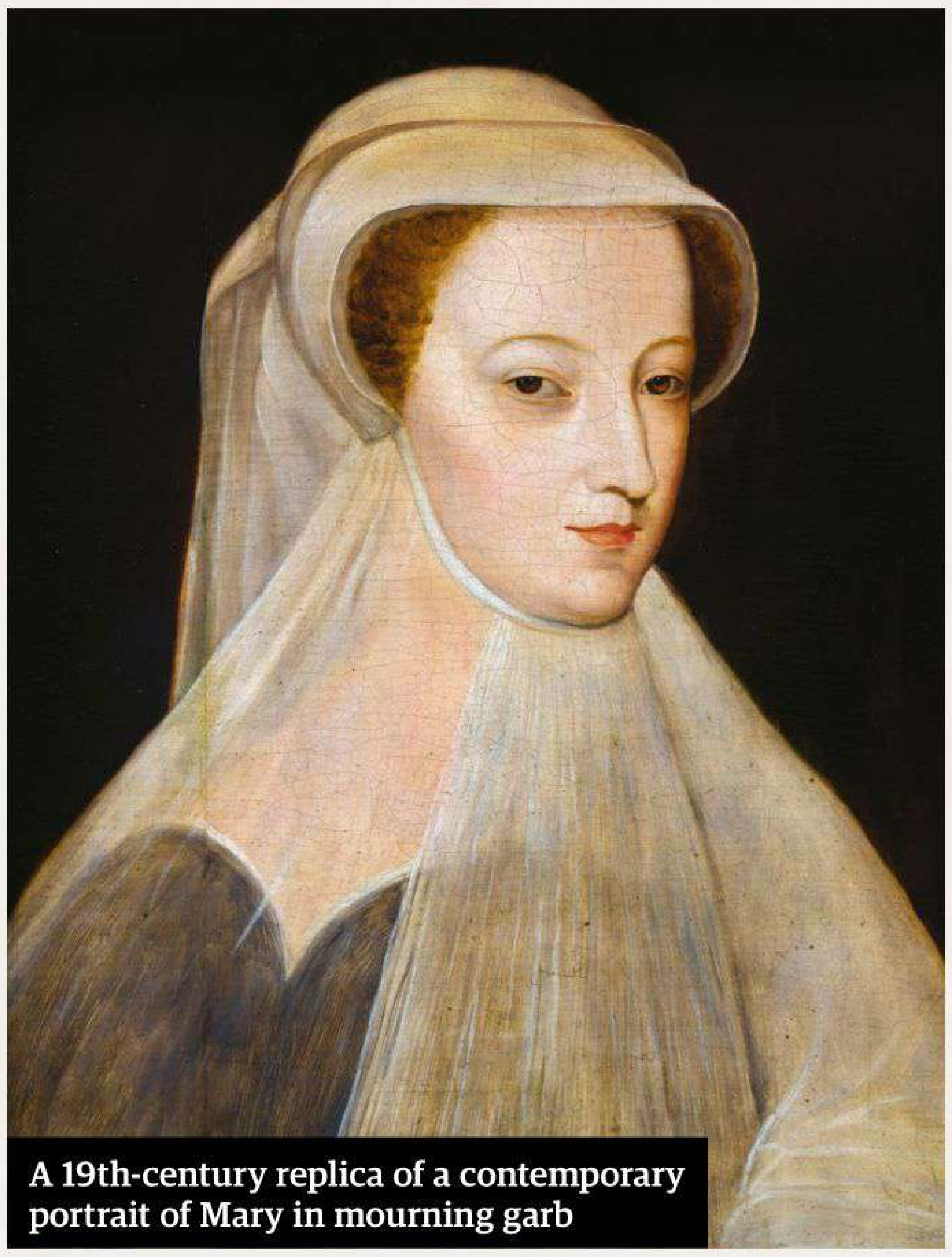
Exhausted by what had been a very long and tiring morning, Mary complained to her father-in-law that her crown was beginning to hurt her head and he ordered that it be removed and held above her as she ate.

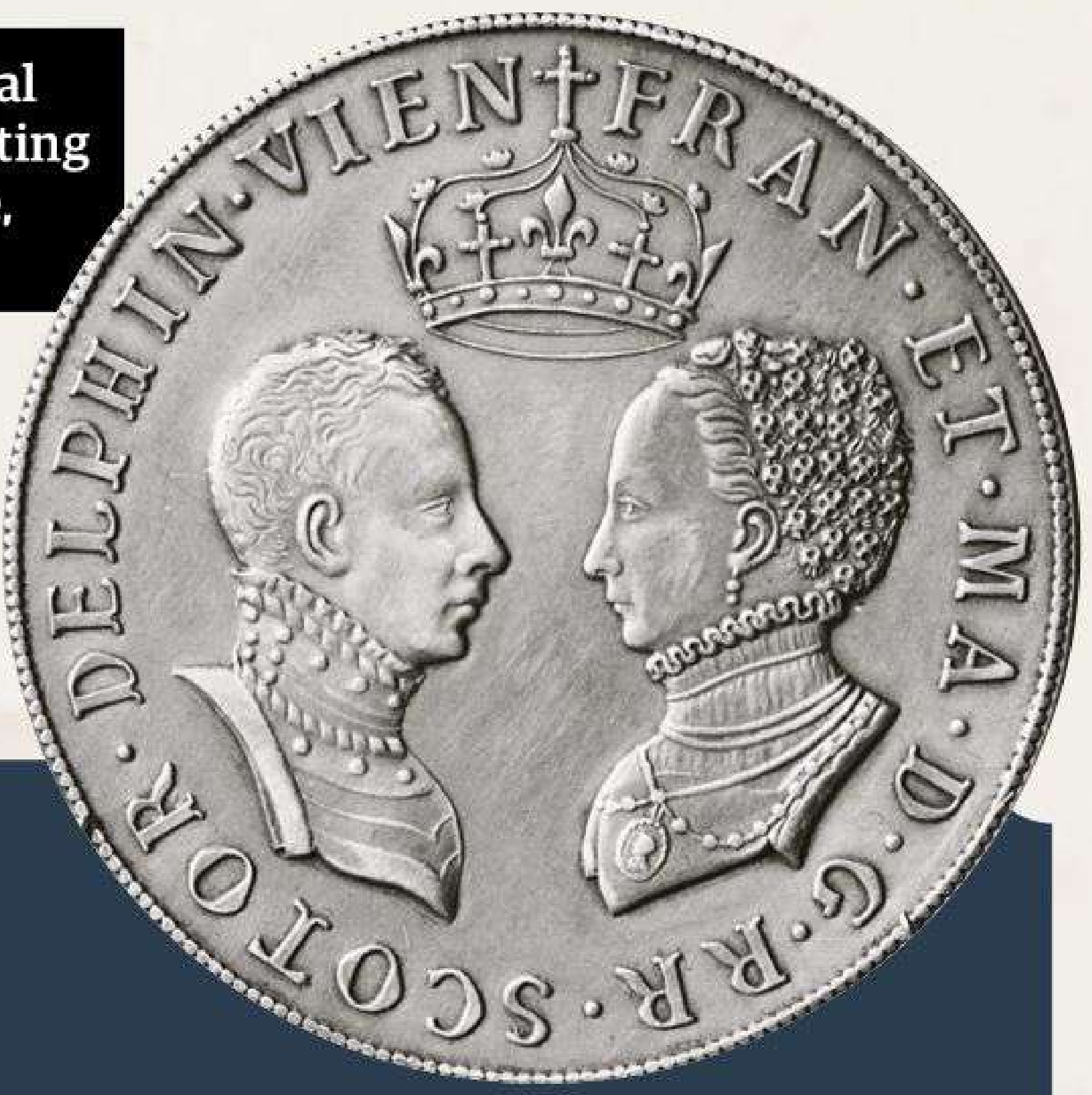
She was not allowed much time to rest after the banquet was over either, for it was followed by a ball, which she opened with her father-in-law while Francis partnered his mother. This went on until five in the afternoon when there was another procession, this time to the Palais du Justice for the evening celebrations. As it lay only a few yards away from Notre Dame on the Île de la Cité, this second procession took a circuitous route so that the crowds that had thronged the capital's streets all afternoon could get a glimpse of the royal family as they went by. Luckily, Mary was not expected to walk the processional route but this time travelled in a cloth of gold litter beside her mother-in-law, while Francis rode on horseback with his father.

Upon their arrival at the Palais du Justice, the royal party were treated to another banquet followed by dancing and a series of elaborate masques and pageants, including one where beautiful court maidens appeared dressed as the muses in golden chariots, all proclaiming the virtues of the new Dauphine while later on the Dauphin's younger brothers rode through the hall on gold and silver hobby horses. Even more impressive though was the pageant at the very end of the night when six exquisitely decorated mechanical ships appeared. One of the ships was steered by King Henry, whose vessel bore him to Mary, who he invited to join him while the Dauphin once again partnered his mother.

As the ships circled the hall and the young Queen laughed with delight, a narrator informed the guests that the vessels represented the voyage of the Argonauts to seize the Golden Fleece with King Henry as Jason and Mary as the Fleece, the golden prize with which he would unite the three nations of France, Scotland and England. There then followed a series of epic poems that extolled Mary as the means by which France and England would be bound together forever when she and Francis became founders of the greatest dynasty that Europe had ever seen, greater even than that governed by the Habsburgs. It was all heady stuff and no one seems to have worried about how all this vainglorious posturing would be viewed across the Channel in England where Mary I was ailing and her sister was poised to take the throne or in Spain where her husband Philip II was keen to retain a proprietary interest in his English demesne.

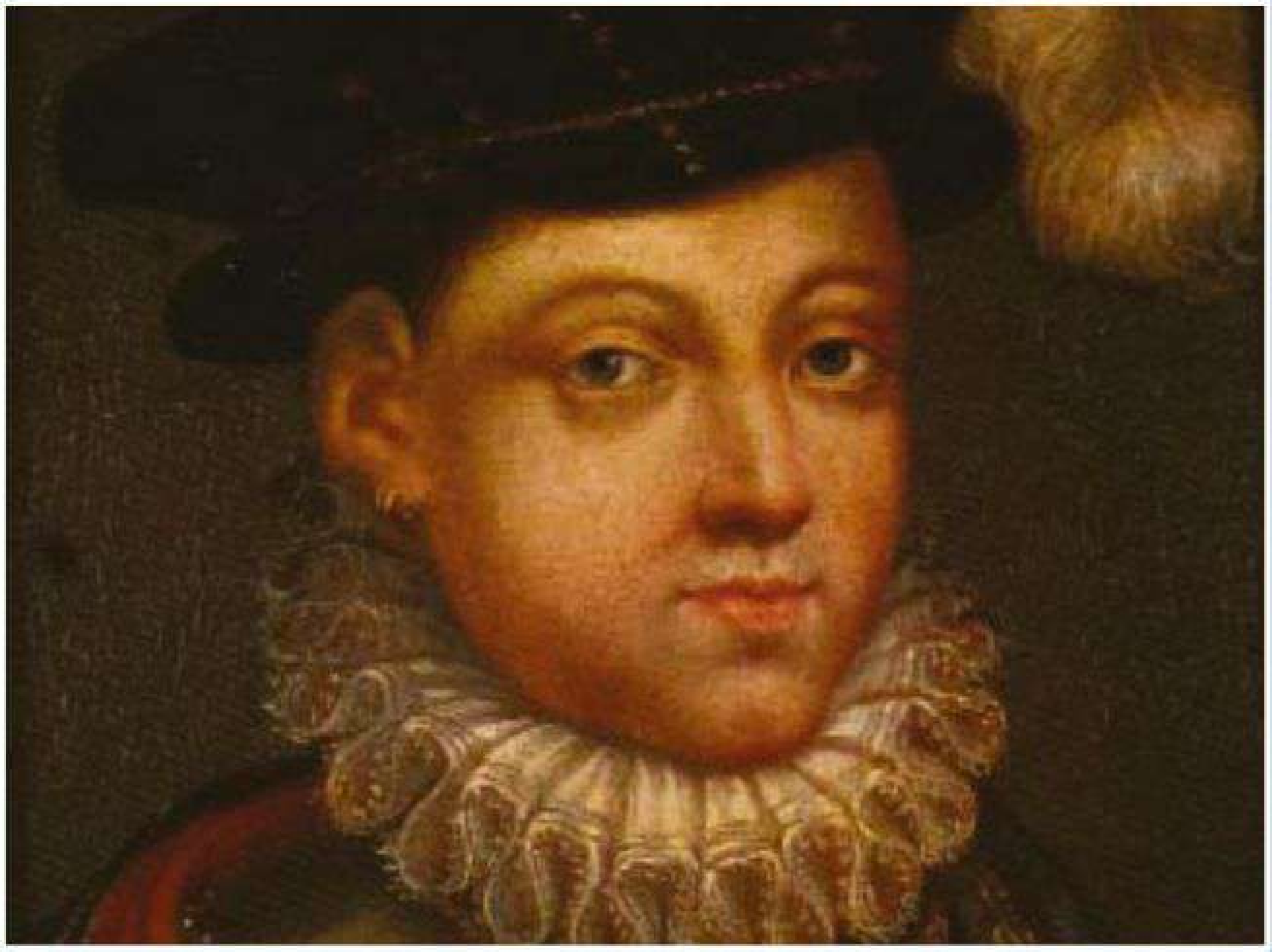
While the banquet in the Bishop's Palace had been an intimate affair for the highest-ranking courtiers, that evening's celebration was a more ceremonial event attended by the entire court as well as foreign ambassadors and guests who had flocked to Paris in order to witness the ceremony. Among these guests were Scottish lords, who were treated with particular courtesy by their French


A 19th-century replica of a contemporary portrait of Mary in mourning garb


A silver medal commemorating the marriage, 1558

## The three husbands of Mary Stuart

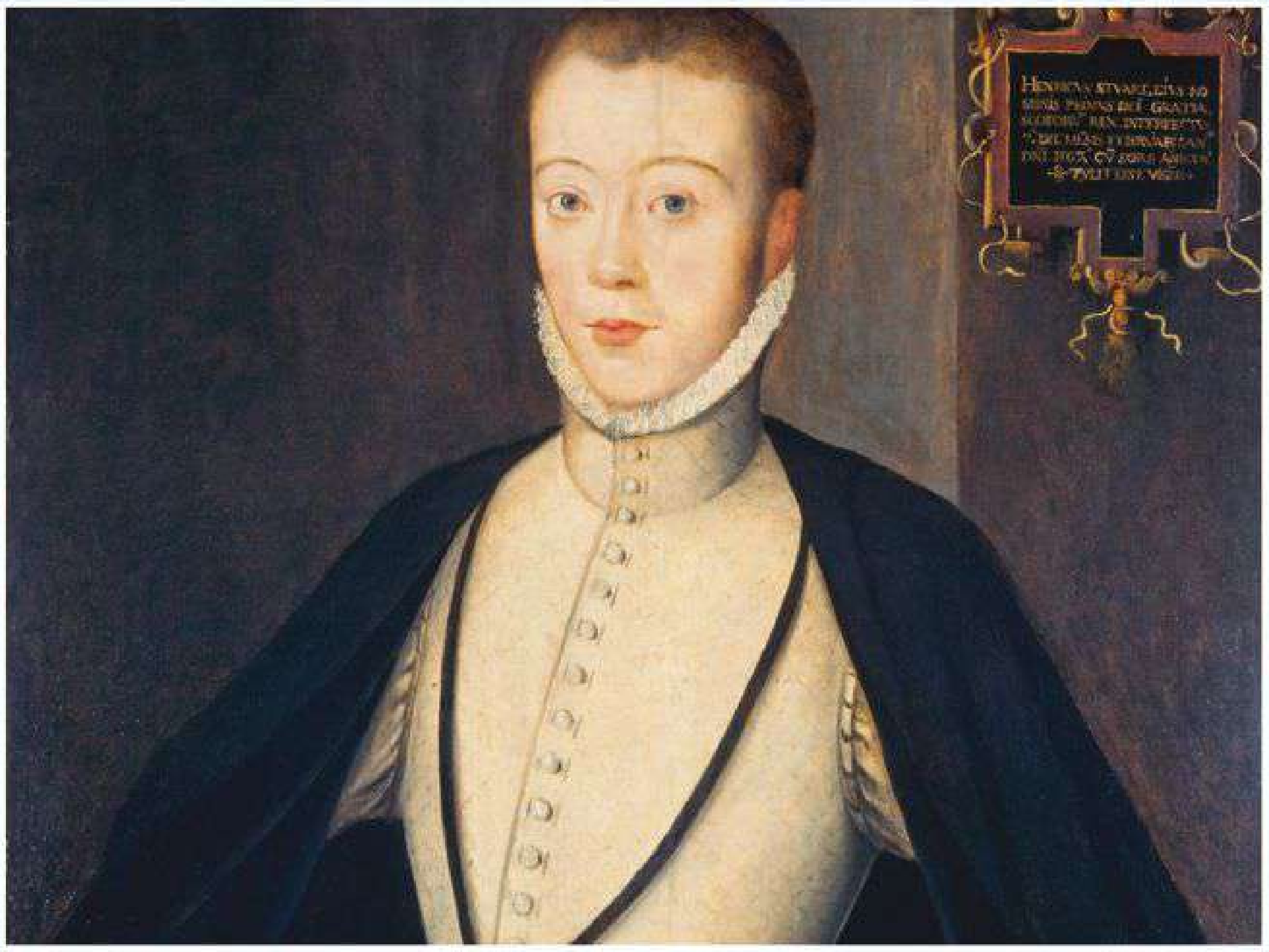
Discover the main men in the life of Mary, Queen of Scots



### Francis II of France

**b.1544-d.1560**

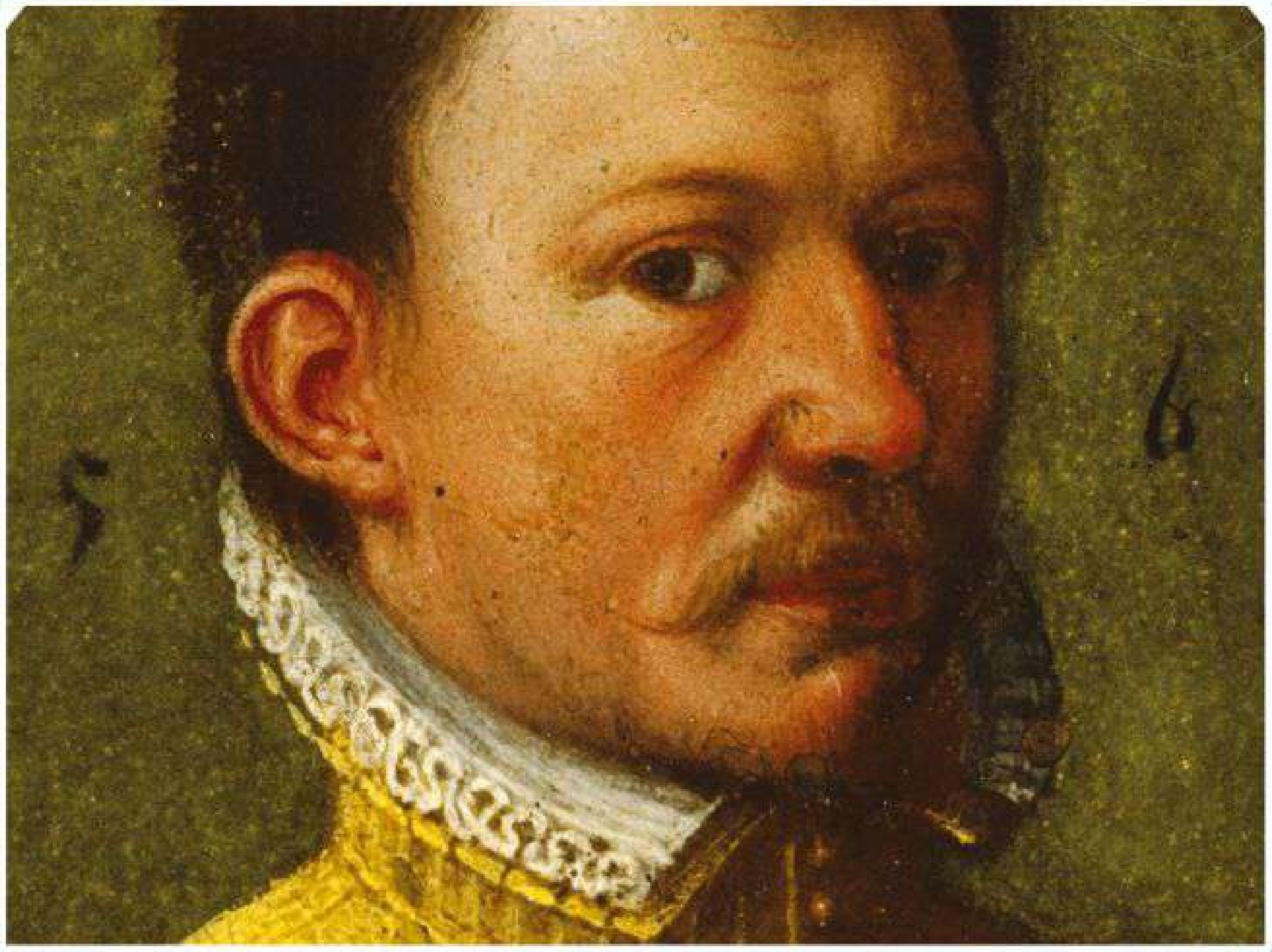
Francis was the eldest son of Henry II and his Italian wife Catherine de' Medici, and the couple were married for 11 years before they managed to produce a much longed-for child. Destined from the cradle to be the husband of his distant cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, Francis was raised alongside his fiancée before they were finally married in April 1558, when he was just 14 years old. Then, just over a year later, the 15-year-old Francis inherited the French throne when his father died as the result of a jousting accident. King Francis II reigned for just 17 months before dying of complications from an ear infection that led to an abscess in his brain. Mary returned to Scotland nine months after his death.



### Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley

**b.1545-d.1567**

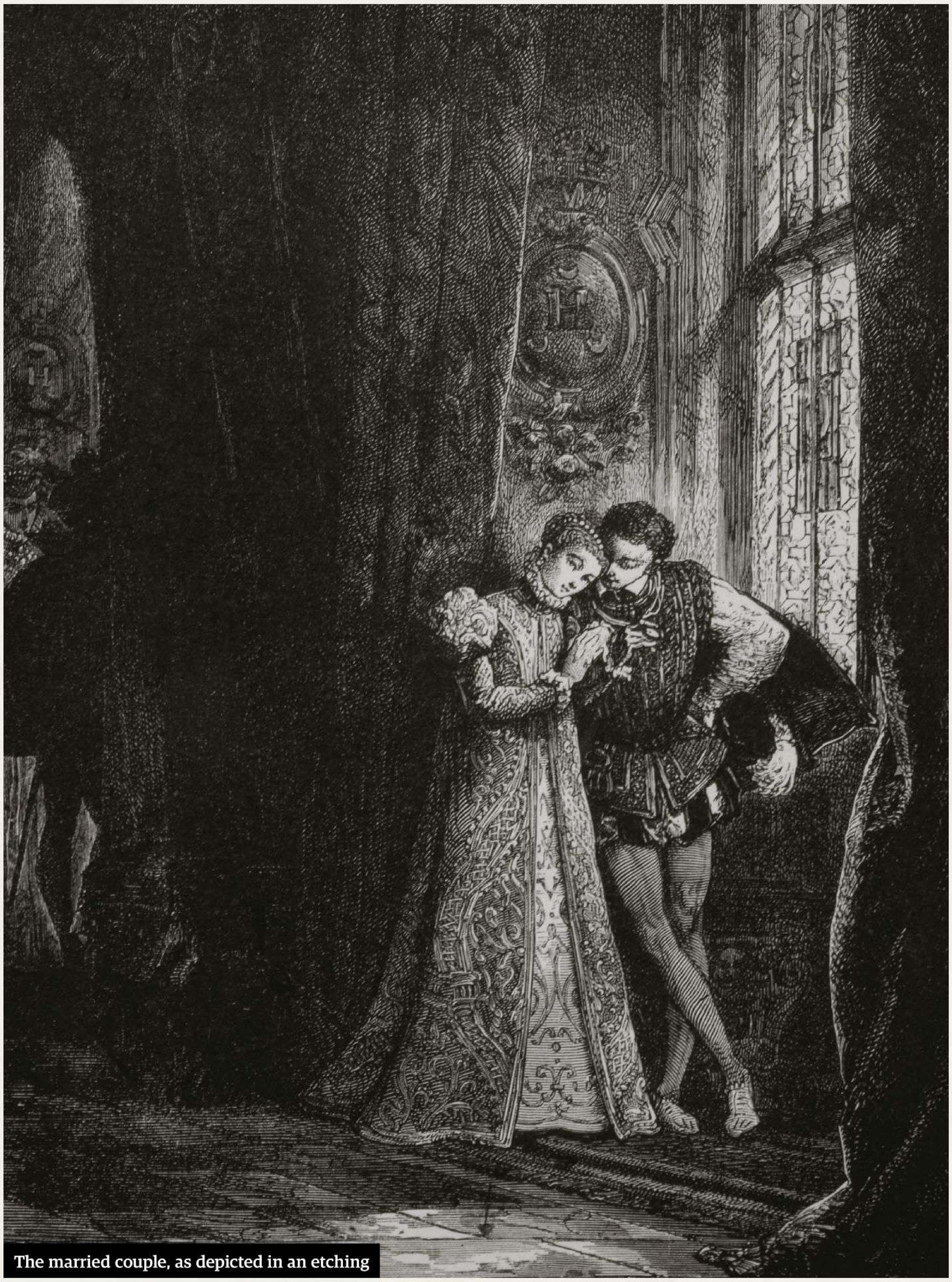
As the eldest son of Matthew Stewart, 4th Earl of Lennox, and Lady Margaret Douglas, the only daughter of Henry VIII's eldest sister Margaret Tudor and her second husband, Darnley had claims to the thrones of both Scotland and England. However, like his first cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, he had been barred from the latter by the last will of Henry VIII. Mary quickly decided to marry him after their second meeting in February 1565, despite or perhaps because of their cousin Elizabeth I's strong opposition to the match. The marriage was a disaster almost from the beginning, ending with Darnley's brutal murder amid the debris of an explosion at the house where he was staying in Edinburgh.



### James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell

**b.1534-d.1578**

Bothwell was one of Mary's closest supporters when she returned to Scotland. Bothwell was implicated in the murder of Mary's second husband but was acquitted in April 1567 even though it is probable he was indeed responsible. Later that month, Bothwell abducted Mary and allegedly forced her to become his wife, although there are reasons to believe she was a willing participant and the 'abduction' story was a clumsy attempt to mollify Bothwell's enemies at court. Their subsequent downfall was swift and brutal – after the couple went their separate ways, Bothwell was imprisoned in Denmark and died insane in a dungeon beneath Dragsholm Castle.



The married couple, as depicted in an etching

hosts, not least because they were viewed as the emissaries of Mary's mother who was unable to make the journey herself. If the Scots had any misgivings about the match – which would both bring them French protection against the English but also potentially leave them vulnerable to French demands that they invade England at some point – they were at least mollified by the generosity of the French king, who ensured that they were handsomely lodged and well treated. They might have been rather less pleased, however, had they been aware that at Fontainebleau just 20 days earlier, their queen had signed her name to three secret documents that effectively handed over her nation to the French should she die without an heir.

The first document was a deed stating that, "In consideration of the singular and perfect affection that the kings of France have always had to the protection and maintenance of the kingdom of Scotland against the English," both Scotland and that all-important claim to the English throne would be inherited by the kings of France in the event of Mary's death without an heir and would become a permanent part of the demesne of the French dauphins. In the second document, Mary agreed that should she die without any heirs, the kings of France would have full rights to all Scottish revenue until they had repaid the 1 million pieces of gold that had allegedly been spent on Mary's education and the defence of her country against the English. As Scotland was not exactly the wealthiest of nations, this financial obligation was guaranteed to keep them under French control for several generations. The third document was signed by both Mary and Francis and affirmed that the other two documents were fully legal and valid and would remain so irrespective of any developments in the future.

> "It seems shocking that a reigning monarch should so carelessly hand her own country over"

It seems shocking that a reigning monarch should so carelessly hand her own country over as a 'gift' to another nation and furthermore knowingly saddle them with a crippling debt that may never be paid off, but Mary was just 15 and acting under the advice of her Guise uncles that she had come to trust implicitly. Not only that but she had become disassociated from her own Scottish heritage and had no idea that her people would be dismayed by the prospect of becoming a French chattel. To her naïve mind, the French were generous with their Scottish allies and could presumably be relied upon to protect their interests should she be unable to do so herself.

However, the secrecy that surrounded these documents (they were not to be discovered until the reign of Louis XIV over a century later) should have alerted Mary to the fact she was acting against the interests of her own people. Certainly the Scottish lords who attended her wedding had some idea that the great show of friendship was hiding something altogether murkier – a suspicion that was only strengthened when Mary's uncle, the Cardinal de Lorraine, demanded that the crown of Scotland be brought to France and placed with the rest of the crown jewels in the Basilica of Saint Denis – a request furiously rejected by the Scots.

The wedding celebrations went on for several days and involved banquets and balls in the Louvre and the traditional tournament in front of the Hôtel de Tournelles in the Marais. No one watching the 39-year-old Henry II riding out in his armour that day could ever have imagined that just over a year later he would be fatally injured on that very same spot during the wedding festivities for his daughter Elisabeth and Philip II of Spain, leaving his teenaged son and daughter-in-law to become rulers of France. For Mary, this would mark another high point, albeit one tinged with tragedy, in her dramatic career, but as she left Paris with her husband to enjoy their honeymoon at the Château de Villers-Cotterêts in Picardy, she was untroubled by the storm clouds gathering overhead and her thoughts were almost certainly focused on the triumphant present, for as she would later write to her mother she accounted herself "one of the happiest women in the world," and at that moment in time, had every reason to believe herself so.

© Alamy, Getty Images, TopFoto

## Henry IV of France & Marie de' Medici

*5 October 1600*

Henry and Marie had two wedding ceremonies. The first, on 5 October 1600 in Tuscany, saw them married by proxy. Festivities followed until it was time for Marie to leave for France. No expense was spared – 2,000 people went with her. They arrived in Marseille on 3 November before heading to Lyon where Marie entered the city to cheering crowds.On 17 December, Henry and Marie received the papal legate's blessing at Saint John's Cathedral.

© Getty

### 11 May 1625 (by proxy)

# Charles I & Henrietta Maria

The wedding of the king and the princess proved that arranged marriages were far from simple

**Written by Jessica Leggett**

The marriage of King Charles I and Princess Henrietta Maria, to secure an alliance between their respective countries of England and France, was the archetype of a royal wedding. Conducted for political means, love eventually fostered between the two after several years to make a happy coincidence. Nevertheless, their journey to wedded bliss was rocky from the very beginning.

The quest to secure Charles a bride was a difficult one. His father, King James VI & I, hoped that a marital and diplomatic alliance with Spain would help stem the Thirty Years' War that had consumed Europe. Unfortunately, the so-called Spanish Match was deeply unpopular, both in parliament and with the English people.

Regardless, King James and Prince Charles pursued this option for almost a decade but ultimately the negotiations failed in 1623. With few suitable brides available for the future monarch, the royals turned their attention towards the French princess, Henrietta Maria, the sister of King Louis XIII of France and the daughter of King Henry IV and Queen Marie de' Medici. She had barely known her father, who was assassinated by a Catholic fanatic before she was even one year old. In February 1624, Charles sent Henry Rich, Viscount Kensington, to the French court in Paris to scout out his potential bride.

The princess made a good impression on Kensington, who noted her interest in Charles. The prince and princess had never met but they may have glimpsed one another the previous year, when Charles had travelled through France to get to Spain for his failed marriage negotiations. At the time Charles had barely given her a thought, but he had certainly caught Henrietta Maria's eye.

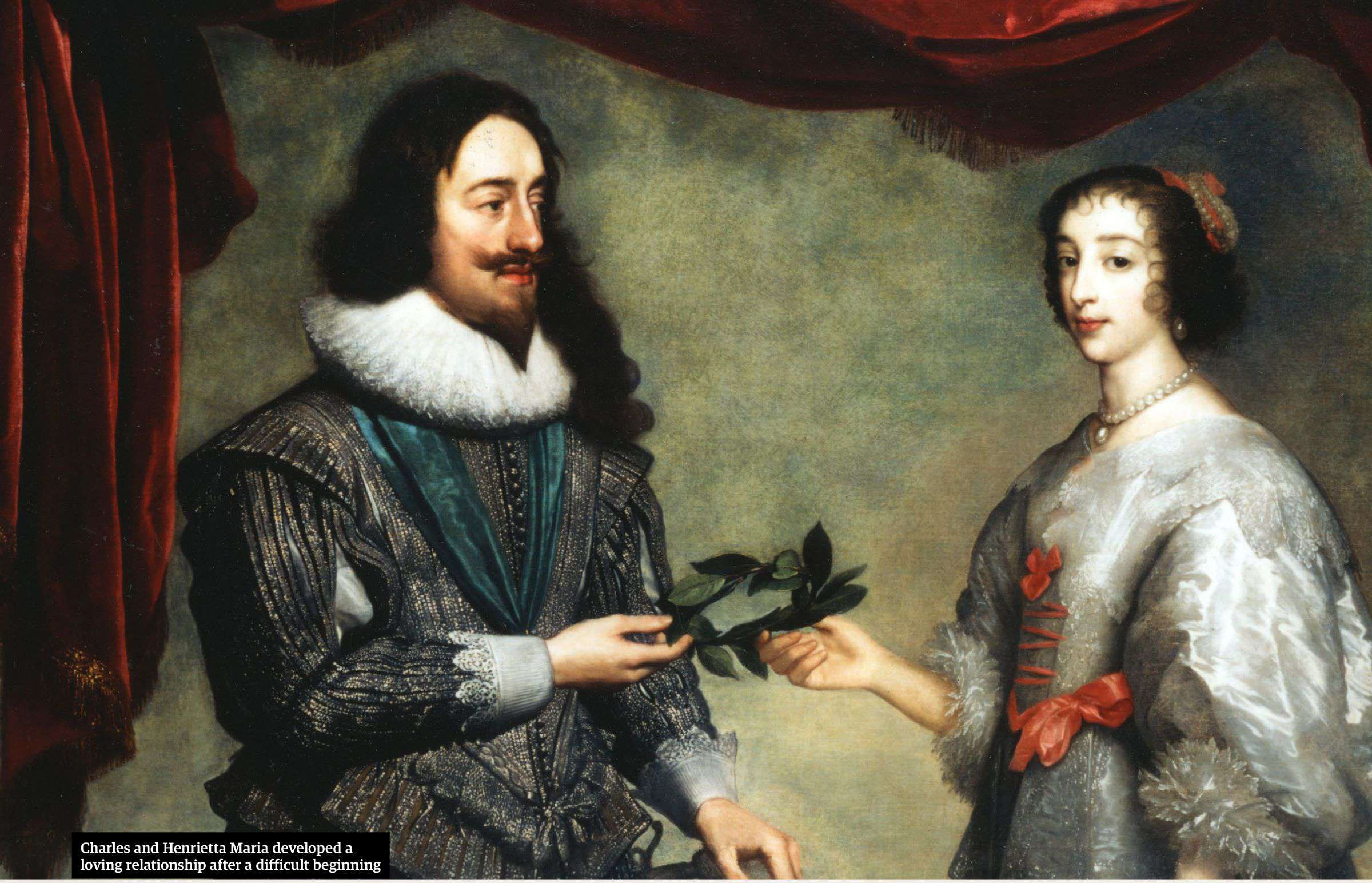
Kensington went ahead with the marriage negotiations and relayed the prince's interest to the princess. Although she was young - Henrietta Maria was just 14 years old at this point, while her prospective husband was nine years older - she was well aware that she was Charles' second choice of bride. Yet she could not let the opportunity to become queen of England slip through her fingers and expressed her enthusiasm for the match. As for Charles, he was just eager to see the marriage through after the embarrassing fiasco with Spain and the simple fact that Henrietta Maria was the best option left.

After a few months, an agreement was reached between England and France, and a treaty was signed in Paris on 10 November 1624. It was ratified a month later by King James and Charles at Cambridge, in the presence of the duke of Buckingham and Lord Conway as members of the Privy Council.

The match with France was just unpopular with parliament as the Spanish one. They disliked the fact that Henrietta Maria was a Roman Catholic and to make matters worse, it had been agreed as part of the treaty that she would be given freedom of worship with a chapel for her own personal use. In parliament's eyes, this automatically made the future queen a target for suspicion.

It wasn't just Henrietta Maria that proved to be a cause of concern for parliament. James and Charles had also secretly agreed with King Louis that all Catholics imprisoned for their religion would be

An engraving depicting the marriage of King Charles I and Princess Henrietta Maria


Charles and Henrietta Maria developed a loving relationship after a difficult beginning

freed and that they would not be persecuted for their beliefs, despite a promise to parliament that they would not concede to such a demand.

In return, Henrietta Maria's dowry was set for £120,000 but France refused to agree to a military alliance with England as part of the treaty, only offering James and Charles vague promises of support. It was not ideal but the king and the prince remained undeterred. With the marriage agreement sealed, Charles sent Henrietta Maria a letter expressing his happiness at their engagement, accompanied with a portrait of himself and jewellery for his new fiancée.

However, the newly engaged couple were sadly mistaken if they thought the hardest part was over. After months of ill health, King James died on 27 March 1625, just as arrangements were being made to bring Henrietta Maria to England. Charles might have postponed the wedding under the circumstances, but negotiations had been hard fought for and now he wanted to get married as quickly as possible.

Six weeks later on 8 May 1625, King Louis XIII announced his sister's engagement to Charles at the Louvre. For the announcement, the princess wore a gown made from sumptuous cloth of silver, embroidered with fleurs-de-lys and covered with diamonds and pearls. So that the marriage could be conducted as quickly as possible, a proxy service was to be held three days later at the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Deeply religious throughout her life, Henrietta Maria spent the night before her wedding in a convent in the suburbs of Paris.

With the arrival of the wedding day, the nobility arrived at the cathedral dressed in all of their finery, while the streets were lined with flocks of people in anticipation for the ceremony. As Charles was in England, it was decided that Claude de Lorraine, Duke of Chevreuse, would act as proxy on his behalf. He wore a bejewelled cloth of gold cap and a cloak, embroidered with gold and diamonds.

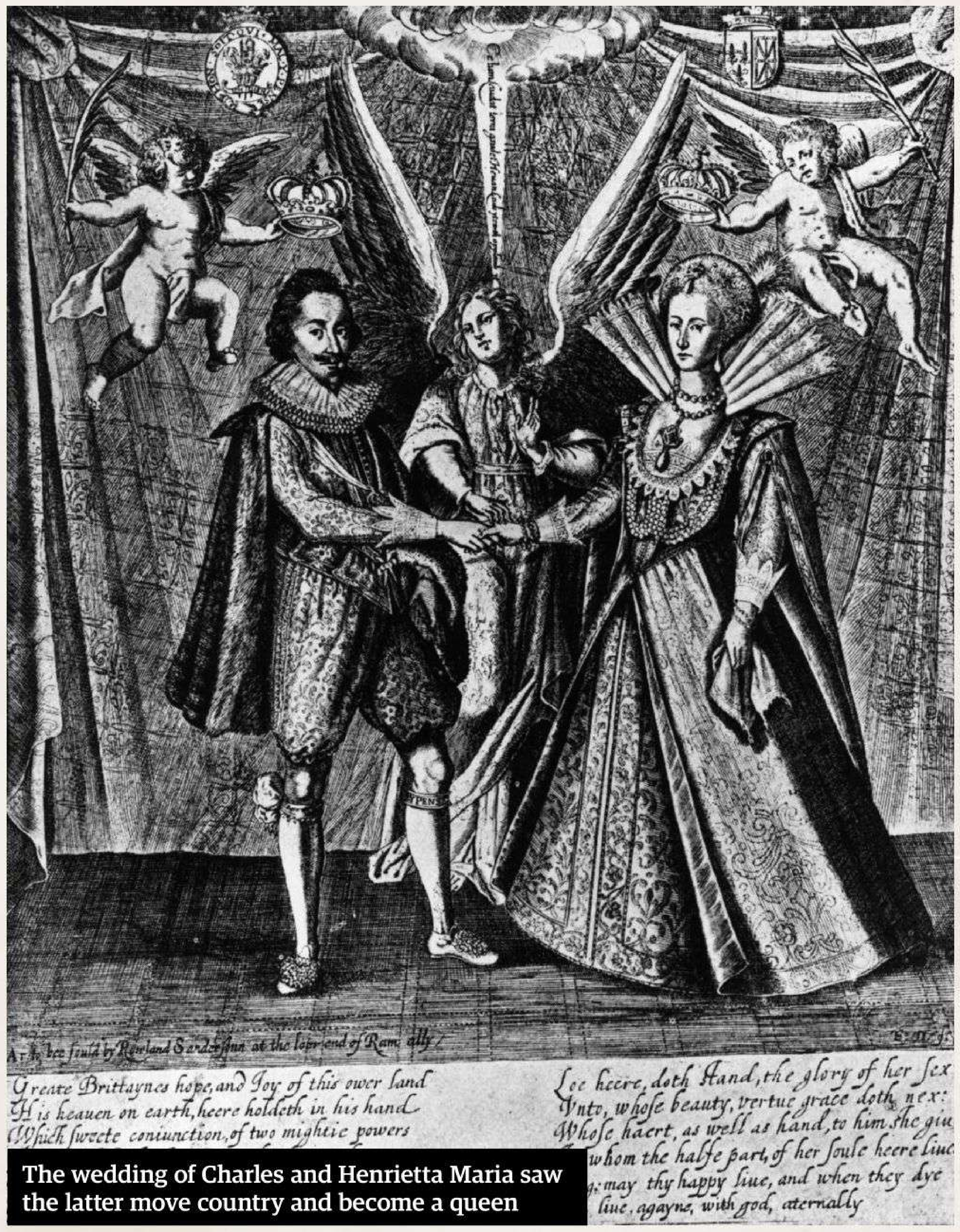
No expense had been spared for the proxy ceremony. The bride, who was now 15 years old, wore a glittering gown covered in gold lilies as well as a crown that was encrusted with sparkling diamonds. A platform had been built especially for the occasion and its pillars were decorated with violet satin and embroidered with lilies. It was located outside the church doors of the cathedral so that Chevreuse, a Huguenot, and the Protestant English ambassadors would not have to compromise themselves by going inside. After the ceremony, Henrietta Maria and the French went inside the cathedral for the wedding Mass. Outside, commemorative medals created for the day were distributed to the crowds, with a portrait of Cupid on one side and the portraits of Charles and his new queen adorning the other.

Following the conclusion of the Mass, loud celebrations got underway with fireworks, bonfires and even canons let off in celebration. Across the Channel, similar celebrations emerged throughout the streets of London as news of the royal match reached the shores. While the marriage could not be consummated, a symbolic ceremony was held with Chevreuse briefly climbing into bed alongside the new queen.

Now that they were married, Charles wanted to bring his new bride to England as soon as possible. However, the plans to meet her were constantly changing, partly due to the king's continued conflict with parliament. It didn't help that the queen's departure from Paris had also been delayed until 22 May due to her brother being unwell and flooding in the north of France.

Charles finally left London on 31 May, travelling through Rochester towards Canterbury, where he stayed for two nights before venturing on to Dover. Arriving promptly, he sent the ship Prince Royal to collect Henrietta Maria from Boulogne, but her journey there had suffered further delays due to the size of her large entourage, and the fact that her mother had been taken ill at Amiens.

When the queen finally reached the French shores she found the Prince Royal was waiting for her, but stormy weather prevented their immediate departure. Eventually, the ship left Boulogne on 12 June and took just over eight hours to reach England, arriving at around 7pm. So that she could arrive ashore easily, an artificial moving bridge had been constructed for England's new queen, which she crossed to step onto her new homeland for the very first time.


A to bee ſould by Rowland Sanderſon at the lower end of Ram ally
Greate Brittaynes hope, and Ioy of this ower land
His heauen on earth, heere holdeth in his hand
Which ſweete coniunction, of two mightie powers
See heere, doth ſtand, the glory of her ſex
Unto, whoſe beauty, vertue grace doth nex:
Whoſe haert, as well as hand, to him ſhe giu
whom the halfe part, of her ſoule heere liue
may thy happy liue, and when they dye
liue, agayne, with god, aeternally

The wedding of Charles and Henrietta Maria saw the latter move country and become a queen

To prepare for her arrival, Charles had repaired Dover Castle to make it more comfortable for his new wife. The effort cost him £2,600 but Henrietta Maria's French attendants were left unimpressed with their new surroundings. Regardless, the queen and her ladies spent the night in Dover while Charles, having returned to Canterbury while awaiting her arrival, promised to fetch her the next day after she had rested from the journey.

The next morning, the king set off down to Dover to collect his bride. Their first meeting was happy and affectionate, with Charles sweeping Henrietta Maria up into his arms and kissing her. Keen to marry his new queen in person, the couple travelled up to Canterbury, where they reportedly conducted another wedding ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral.

Sitting down for dinner later in the day, Charles cut up the meat for Henrietta Maria's meal himself as a loving gesture – it appeared that the newlyweds would get on very well indeed. That evening, the pair made their way to the gatehouse at Saint Augustine Abbey for their wedding night. The duchess of Chevreuse escorted Henrietta Maria into the bedchamber while two attendants accompanied Charles inside. After the king dismissed them all, he locked the door and the newlyweds consummated their marriage.

The royal entourage set off towards London the next day when an incident between Charles and Henrietta Maria's principal lady-in-waiting, Madame St George, caused a little bit of tension. St George, who had been Henrietta Maria's close confidant, had attempted to ride in the newlyweds' carriage, only to be rebuffed by King Charles who firmly stated that it was no longer her place to sit by his wife. It would be only the first of many clashes that the monarch would experience with Henrietta Maria's attendants.

The king and queen finally reached Gravesend on 16 June. They both wore fine green clothing and together they boarded a barge to take them up the Thames to Whitehall. Along the way, they waved to the crowds who had lined up to see them. In celebration, the guns of the Tower of London were fired as the couple made their way towards their final destination, Denmark House.

On 17 June, a final ceremony was held in the Palace of Whitehall to officially confirm the marriage and to solidify Henrietta Maria's status as queen of her husband's dominions of England, Scotland and Ireland. Although their initial meeting had gone well, cracks in the royal couple's relationship quickly began to show thanks to their different languages and religions, the sovereign's reliance on his father's old favourite, the duke of Buckingham, and Henrietta Maria's French entourage. Although the king and queen would eventually overcome these obstacles, they could not escape the bubbling tensions with parliament, igniting the English Civil War just two decades later.

## The Spanish match

### Charles and Henrietta Maria's marriage was almost not meant to be

King James VI & I was determined to secure a marriage between his son, Charles, and Infanta Maria Anna, the daughter of King Philip III of Spain. It was a tempting alliance for James, particularly as Spain had offered a large bridal dowry and a promise to not interfere with problems in Ireland if James stepped into to control English privateers in Spanish American waters.

From 1614, negotiations between the two countries went back and forth for almost ten years. The English parliament, specifically the House of Commons, held great animosity towards Spain after the Anglo-Spanish War, which had ended in 1604. The situation between the monarchy and parliament deteriorated further in 1621 when the latter demanded a Protestant bride for Charles, leaving both the king and the prince furious. They believed it was their right to choose a bride and so Charles decided to take the matter into his own hands.

In February 1623, Charles travelled to Spain in disguise along with the duke of Buckingham to see the infanta and secure the marriage once and for all. As it turned out, politics was not the only issue preventing it from going ahead as Maria Anna had no interest in the prince at all. She had no desire to marry a non-Catholic, and Spain's demands for England to remove the penal laws against English Catholics was a condition for the marriage that Charles could not meet. After eight months, Charles and Buckingham returned to England without a bride, to the relief of the English people.

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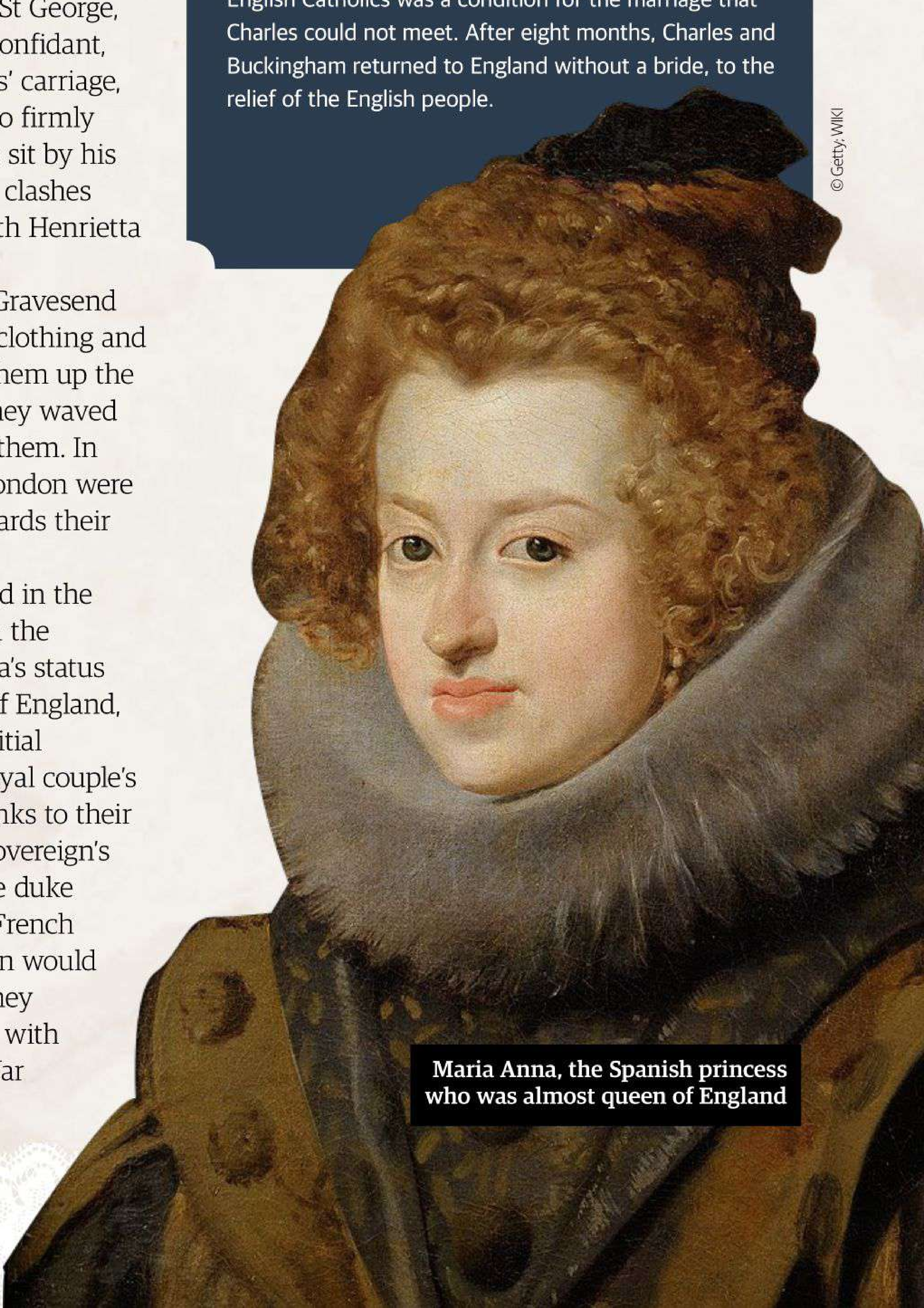

Maria Anna, the Spanish princess who was almost queen of England

عمل حاجی مدنی

## Dara Shukoh & Nadira Banu

*1 February 1633*

As the first-born son of Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal for his dead wife, Dara Shukoh was destined to have a lavish wedding. Celebrations included a procession of musicians on elephants and men with presents. More celebrating followed at the prince's dwellings before Dara Shukoh was mounted on a "mountainous, heavenly moving, rose-coloured horse" and set out with his entourage.

©WIKI

## 9 June 1660

# Louis XIV & Maria Theresa

The wedding of Louis XIV of France and the Infanta Maria Theresa of Spain was one of the most important dynastic matches of the 17th century, ending a 24-year war

**Written by Melanie Clegg**

Ever since Louis XIV had succeeded to the throne in May 1643, at just four years old, there had been a great deal of discussion and conjecture about who would be his future bride. Naturally, his Spanish mother, Anne of Austria, was keen for him to marry the Spanish princess Maria Theresa, daughter of her brother Philip IV and his wife Elisabeth of France, but as France had been at war with Spain since 1635 and the hostilities showed no sign of abating, it seemed unlikely that her plans should ever come to fruition. Thanks to the Reformation and spread of Protestantism throughout Europe in the previous century, eligible Catholic princesses were rather more scarce than they had been in the past. There were still some potential brides around, however, such as the three daughters of Louis' aunt Christine of France (she was married to the Duke of Savoy), and Anne-Marie-Louise, the richest woman in Europe and the eldest daughter and heiress of Louis' uncle Gaston, Duc d'Orléans. There was also Henrietta Anne, the youngest daughter of another aunt, Henrietta Maria, Queen of England. Normally an English princess would have been considered highly unsuitable due to the nation's rejection of Catholicism and the Protestantism of the ruling house, but Henrietta Anne had resided at the French court since she was a toddler and had, in consequence, been raised as a Catholic. All of these princesses were first cousins of the young king, but the potential genetic repercussions of such a match were of little interest to Queen Anne and her chief advisor, Cardinal Mazarin, as they deliberated over the young king's matrimonial prospects.

Although Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans had called Louis her 'little husband' since he was born and was clearly very keen to marry him and become Queen of France, the fact that she had an irascible, difficult personality and was 11 years older than her prospective groom made it very unlikely that the match would ever take place. The charming and pretty Henrietta Anne of England was a much more attractive prospect, as she was younger than Louis and had a meek and obliging nature that would prevent her from usurping her aunt, Queen Anne's, much-prized position as the most important woman in France and the power behind her son's throne. She was, however, extremely poor and, along with her mother, the widowed Queen Henrietta Maria, existed on a small pension erratically doled out by Queen Anne. The English royal family had been exiled in Europe since their defeat in the English Civil War and the execution of Henrietta Anne's father, Charles I. This, combined with the fact that Oliver Cromwell was firmly ensconced as Lord Protector of England, meant it looked very unlikely that they would ever be restored to the throne. Henrietta Anne's impoverished brother, Charles II, was living on his sister Mary's charity in Holland, and anyone who married her would not only have to be wealthy enough to overlook her lack of dowry but could also, potentially, be expected to financially support her family as well as finance any future attempts that her brother might make to take back his crown. Although Louis felt a great deal of sympathy for his Stuart cousins, he and his chief advisor, Cardinal Mazarin, were also keen to

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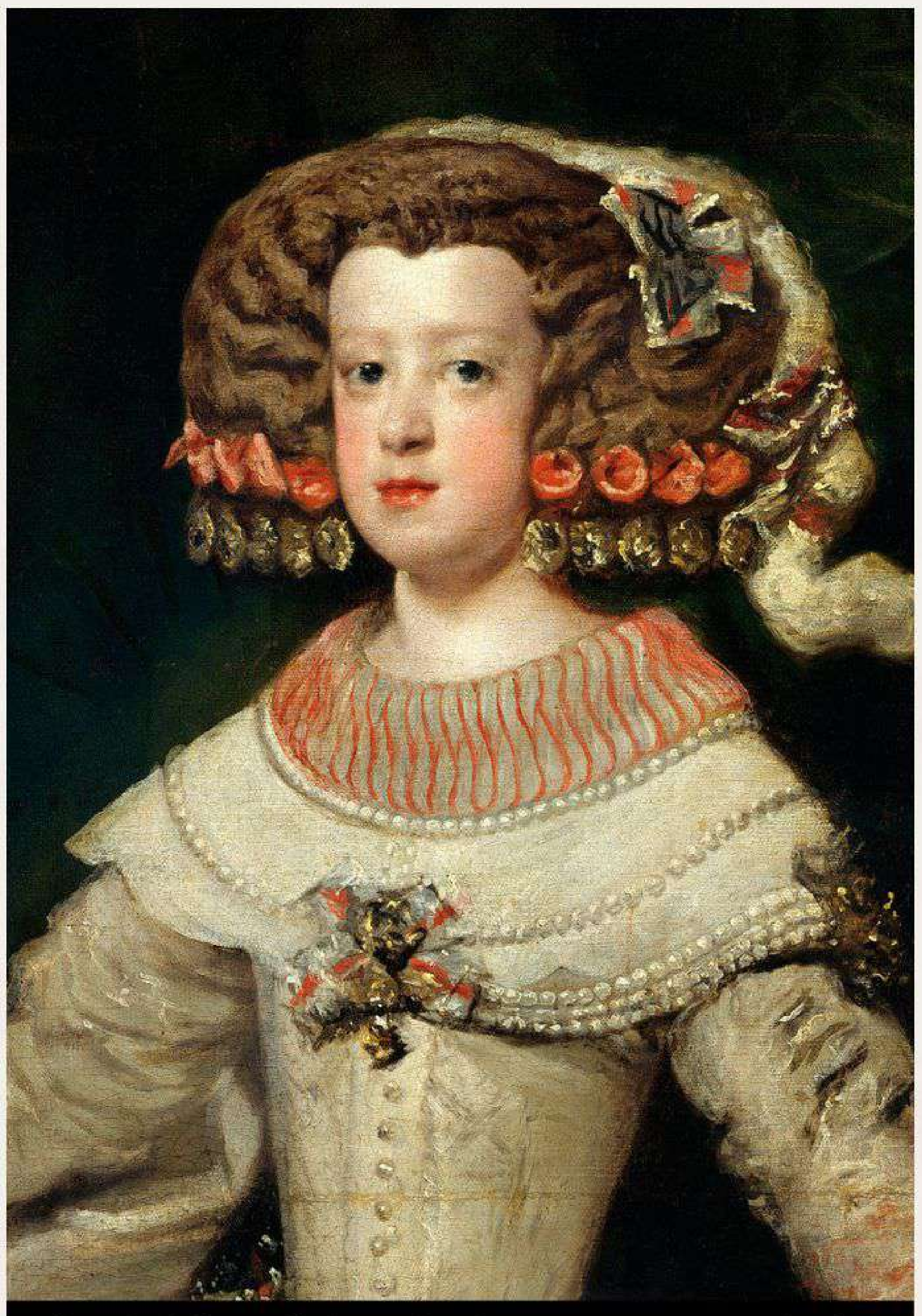
Although the wedding of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa took place in a relatively humble church, it still had all the trappings of a royal ceremony



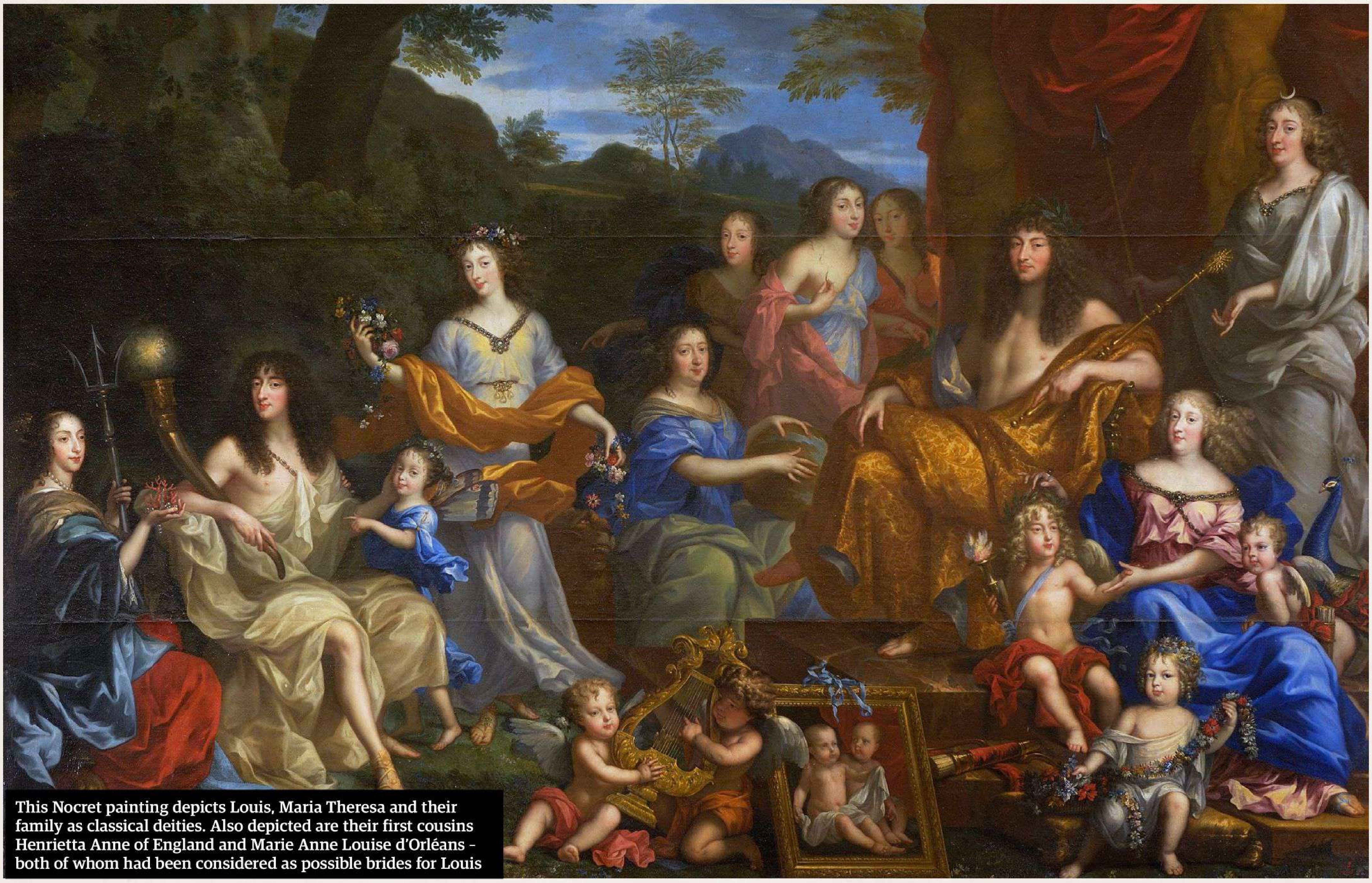
After their betrothal, Maria Theresa sent a portrait of herself by Velazquez to the French court, where her peculiar and rather old-fashioned Spanish clothes and hairstyle were ridiculed by the courtiers

maintain a good relationship with Oliver Cromwell and a marriage with one of the exiled English king's sisters would almost certainly put their already-fragile friendship at risk.

The matter could have been left until Louis was nearly in his 30s but, when he almost died of typhoid in 1658 at the age of 19, Mazarin decided that it was far too risky to wait much longer for him to produce an heir and so began to seriously look for a bride. His first choice was Margaret Yolande of Savoy, the second daughter of Louis' aunt Christine, Duchess of Savoy. Christine was thrilled that her daughter might one day be Queen of France, even if this kicked off a serious rift with her sister, Henrietta Maria, who had rather hoped that her own daughter, Henrietta Anne, would be chosen instead. Queen Anne was less than delighted with Mazarin's choice, too, as she still hoped that a Spanish match could be made for her son. Nonetheless, in the autumn of 1658, the entire French court travelled in an enormous cavalcade down to Lyon, where they were to liaise with the Savoyard royal family so that Louis and Margaret Yolande could meet in person. Although Louis appeared compliant enough, he had insisted on bringing his mistress Marie Mancini, Cardinal Mazarin's least-favourite niece, along and spent the entire trip glued to her side. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the meeting at Lyon did not go as planned – although Margaret Yolande was rather taken with the energetic, good-looking young French king, Louis thought she was awkward and boring and complained that she was too tanned – a mark against her in a time when aristocratic and royal ladies were expected to protect their complexions in order to remain as white-skinned as possible.

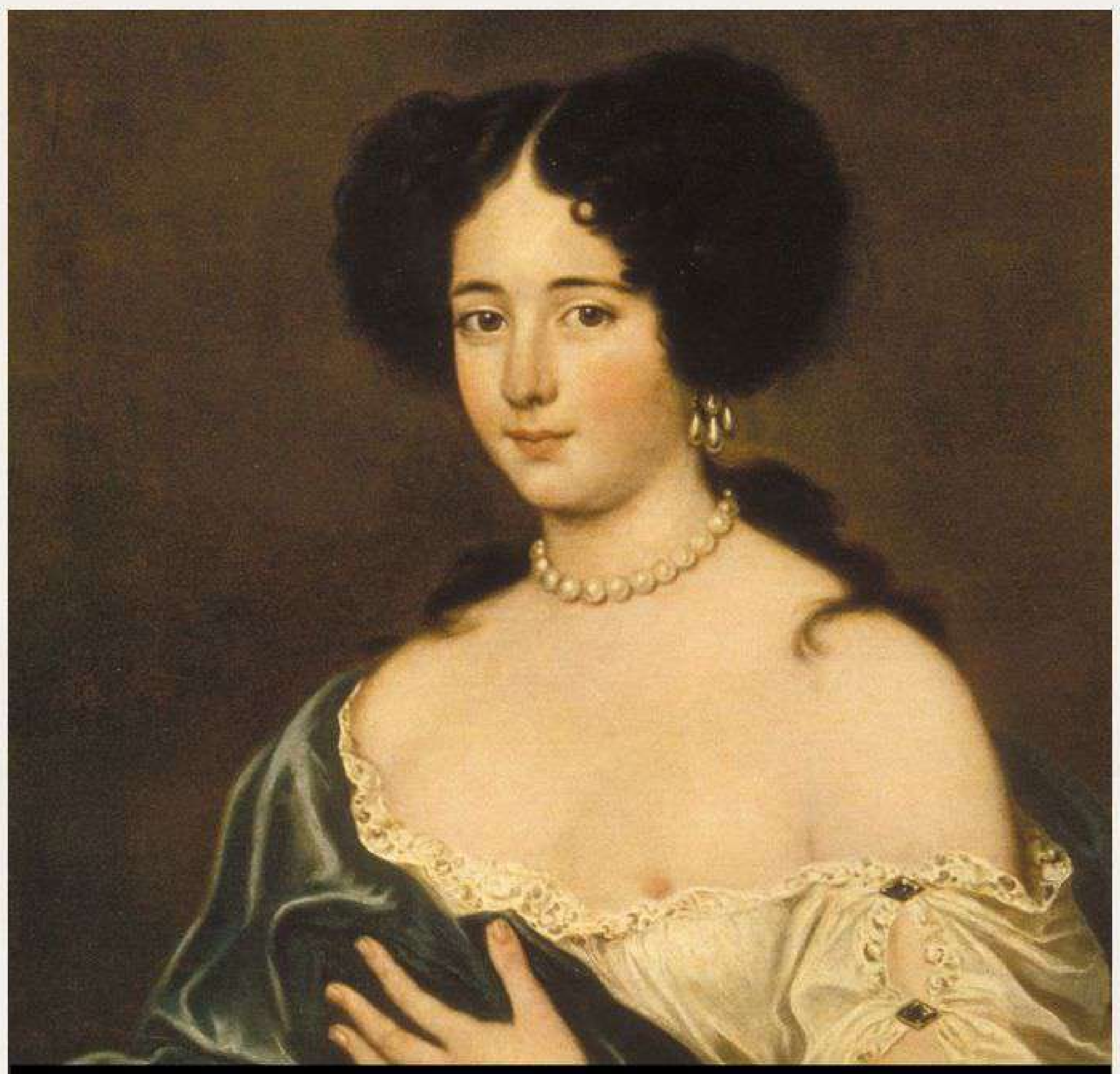
> *"Louis begged his mother to let him marry his mistress, Marie Mancici"*

When Philip IV of Spain heard about the meeting at Lyon he was absolutely outraged, and exclaimed to his courtiers that the match between his nephew Louis and the Princess of Savoy "cannot and will not be". Almost as soon as the French royal party had returned home to Paris, an envoy arrived from the Spanish court offering peace and the hand of the Infanta Maria Theresa to seal the deal. It's likely that Mazarin had planned this all along and that the Lyon meeting had merely been a ruse designed to force the King of Spain into offering the match that the French had really



This Nocret painting depicts Louis, Maria Theresa and their family as classical deities. Also depicted are their first cousins Henrietta Anne of England and Marie Anne Louise d'Orléans – both of whom had been considered as possible brides for Louis wanted all along. Certainly, Queen Anne was beside herself with joy when she heard the news, as were most of the people of France, who were delighted that the long conflict with Spain was drawing to an end and even hailed the Spanish Infanta as the 'Queen of Peace'. It seemed like the only person who wasn't happy was Louis himself, who lavished even more attention on Marie Mancini, with whom he was completely infatuated, and even tearfully begged his mother and the Cardinal to let him marry her instead, much to their horror. After several months of anxiety and pleading, Louis was finally forced to concede defeat and, in August 1659, he said a final farewell to Marie, who was sent away from court with a splendid parting gift of Henrietta Maria's beautiful pearl earrings. The Treaty of the Pyrenees, which ended the war between France and Spain and agreed the terms of Louis' marriage with the Infanta Maria Theresa, was signed three months later on 7 November 1659. The treaty included the surrendering of the bride and her descendants' right to the Spanish throne once an enormous dowry of 500,000 écus had been paid, although it was never paid and Louis and Maria Theresa's grandson would eventually mount the throne of Spain as Philip V. However, now that they were formally betrothed, Louis and Maria Theresa exchanged portraits and Louis even sent a rather stilted letter to his future wife, only for her extremely strict father to refuse to hand it over, saying it was "too soon" for them to correspond.

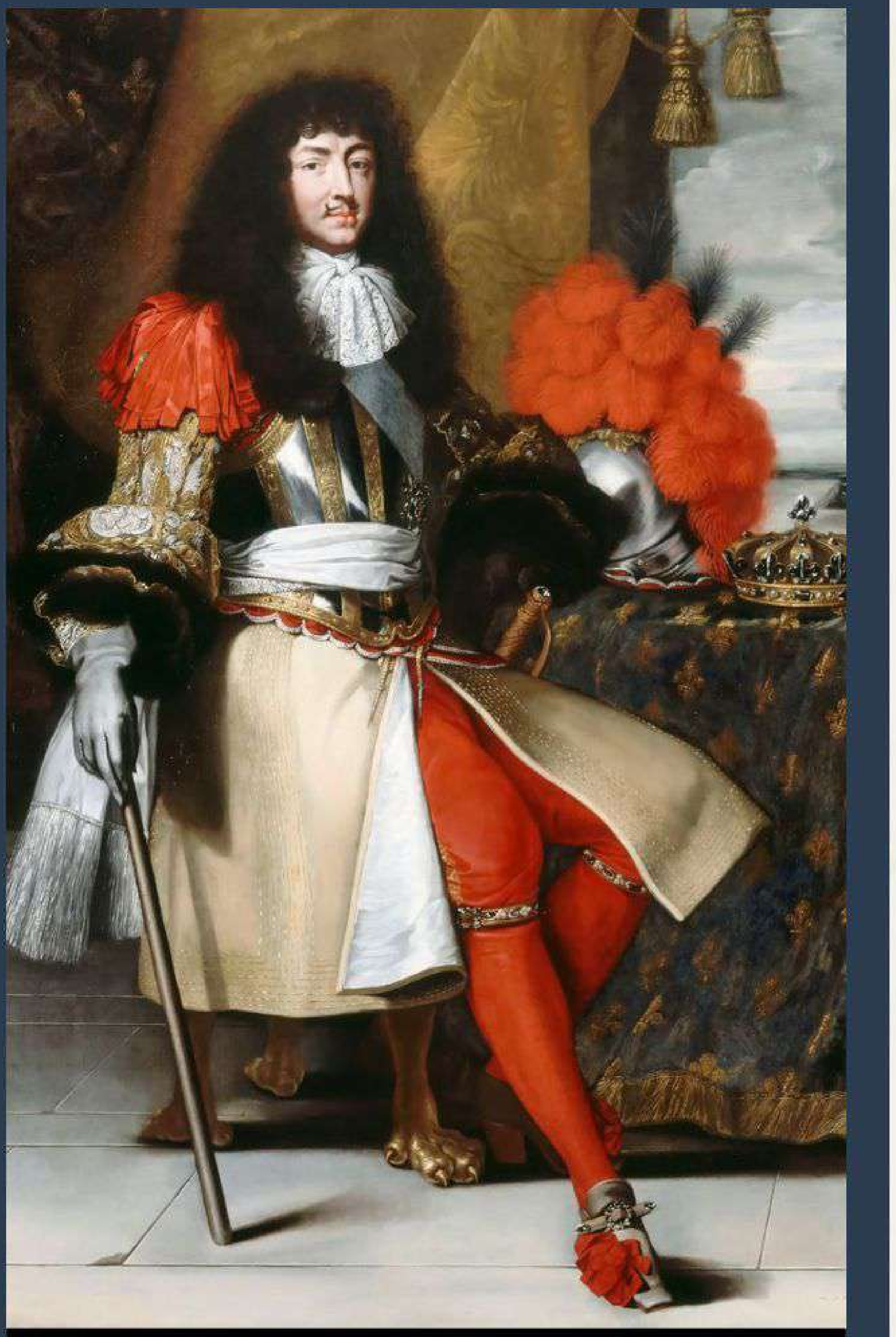
In fact, the rigidly austere and very formal Spanish court where Maria Theresa had been raised was a marked contrast to the much more fun-loving and light-hearted French court - there had already been some raised eyebrows over the old-fashioned and restrictive Spanish clothes and hairstyle she sported in the portrait sent to Paris, which were very different to the light silks, tumbling ringlets and exposed shoulders and bosoms favoured by the French ladies, even royal ones. Nonetheless, Louis and his mother were reassured by reports that Maria Theresa had fancied herself in love with the idea of him for several years and was beyond delighted that their marriage was finally going to take place and that at long last she was to come to France. The pair were married in a simple proxy ceremony at Fuenterrabia in Spain on 3 June 1660, with a Spanish nobleman standing in for King Louis and King Philip giving his daughter away. The French court arrived in Fuenterrabia the very next day but, despite the fact that the young couple were now married by proxy, Philip was unwilling to let them meet, suggesting instead that Louis should ride past a window that Maria Theresa was standing at so that they could inspect each other from a distance. This, naturally, Louis would not agree to do and instead he disguised himself and gatecrashed a meeting between the French and Spanish courts in order to get a closer look at his bride. Although Louis had a taste for bold, attractive brunettes, he was still very pleased by this first glimpse of Maria Theresa, who was very small with thick blonde hair, huge blue eyes and a delicate pale complexion that would make her much envied at the French court. Although she had been reasonably well educated, the Spanish Infanta was not especially intelligent and was uninterested in politics or intellectual matters, which was a huge relief to the French, who


Italian beauty Marie Mancini, one of the famously witty and attractive nieces of Louis' chief advisor Cardinal Mazarin, was the young king's first true love. He was forced to abandon her in order to marry Maria Theresa

## The surprise Sun King

Louis was encouraged to consider himself very special from an early age. It's little wonder he's seen as the quintessential absolutist monarch

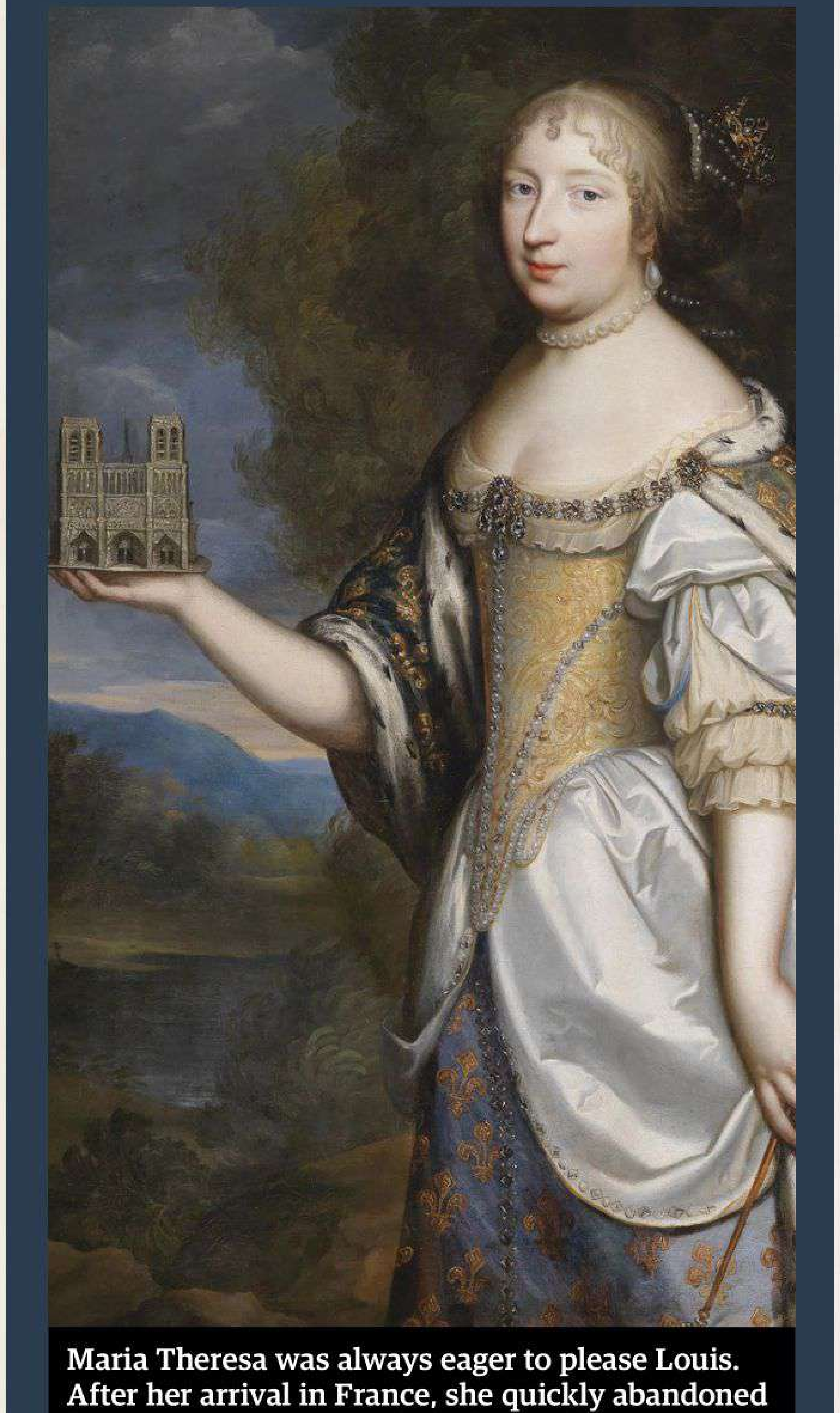
Born on 5 September 1638 after his parents Louis XIII and Anne of Austria had been married for 23 years, Louis was given the middle name Dieudonné in reference to what was regarded as the 'God given' nature of his birth, which was considered all the more miraculous because his parents had been effectively estranged for a number of years before the unexpected conception of their first surviving child. Louis was adored by his mother and would become even more important to her when he succeeded to the throne in 1643 at the age of just four years old. The early years of Louis' reign, during which a council headed by his mother governed on his behalf, were turbulent but once he reached his majority and was able to rule alone he proved himself to be a strong and capable ruler with, thanks to his mother's encouragement, an absolute and unshakeable faith in his own divine right to rule. When he died at the age of 76 on 1 September 1715, he had ruled over France for more than 72 years, which remains the longest-recorded reign of a monarch of a sovereign country in European history.


Louis was the master of using his own image as propaganda and made sure that artists always made him look as self-assured, handsome and regal as possible - even when the pose appears relatively relaxed

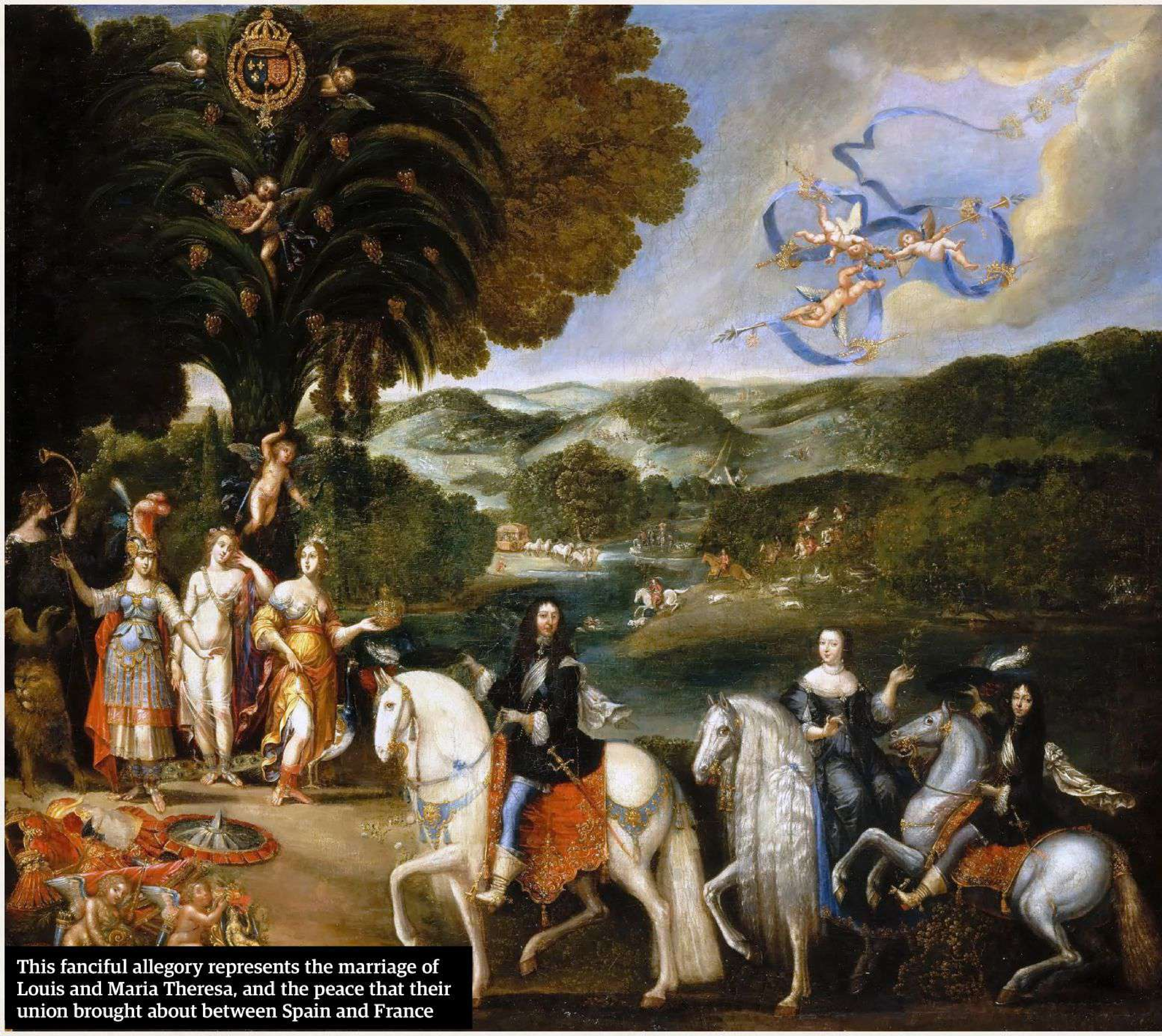
## A pious princess

### Maria Theresa had had a sheltered childhood, so the French court's scandalous goings-on were a shock

Born in the Escorial Palace in Spain on 10 September 1638, five days after her future husband and first cousin twice over Louis XIV, the Infanta Maria Theresa was the only surviving daughter of Philip IV of Spain and his first wife Elisabeth of France. Raised in the splendid but austere surroundings of the Spanish court, Maria Theresa was carefully protected at all times and rarely seen in public. Although their countries were at war, she developed a crush on her cousin Louis XIV when she was very young and always hoped that they would be able to marry one day, not least because she had been raised to consider anything less than a king unworthy of her hand. After her marriage she gained a reputation for being exceedingly devout and rather boring with few interests other than eating chocolate, sleeping and playing with the dwarfs that she brought with her from Spain. The couple had six children together, only one of whom, Louis, the Grand Dauphin, survived childhood. When Maria Theresa died on 30 July 1683 at the age of 44, Louis was genuinely sad and remarked, "This is the first trouble she has ever given me."



**Maria Theresa was always eager to please Louis. After her arrival in France, she quickly abandoned her unattractive Spanish clothes and began to dress in the more fashionable and flattering French style instead**

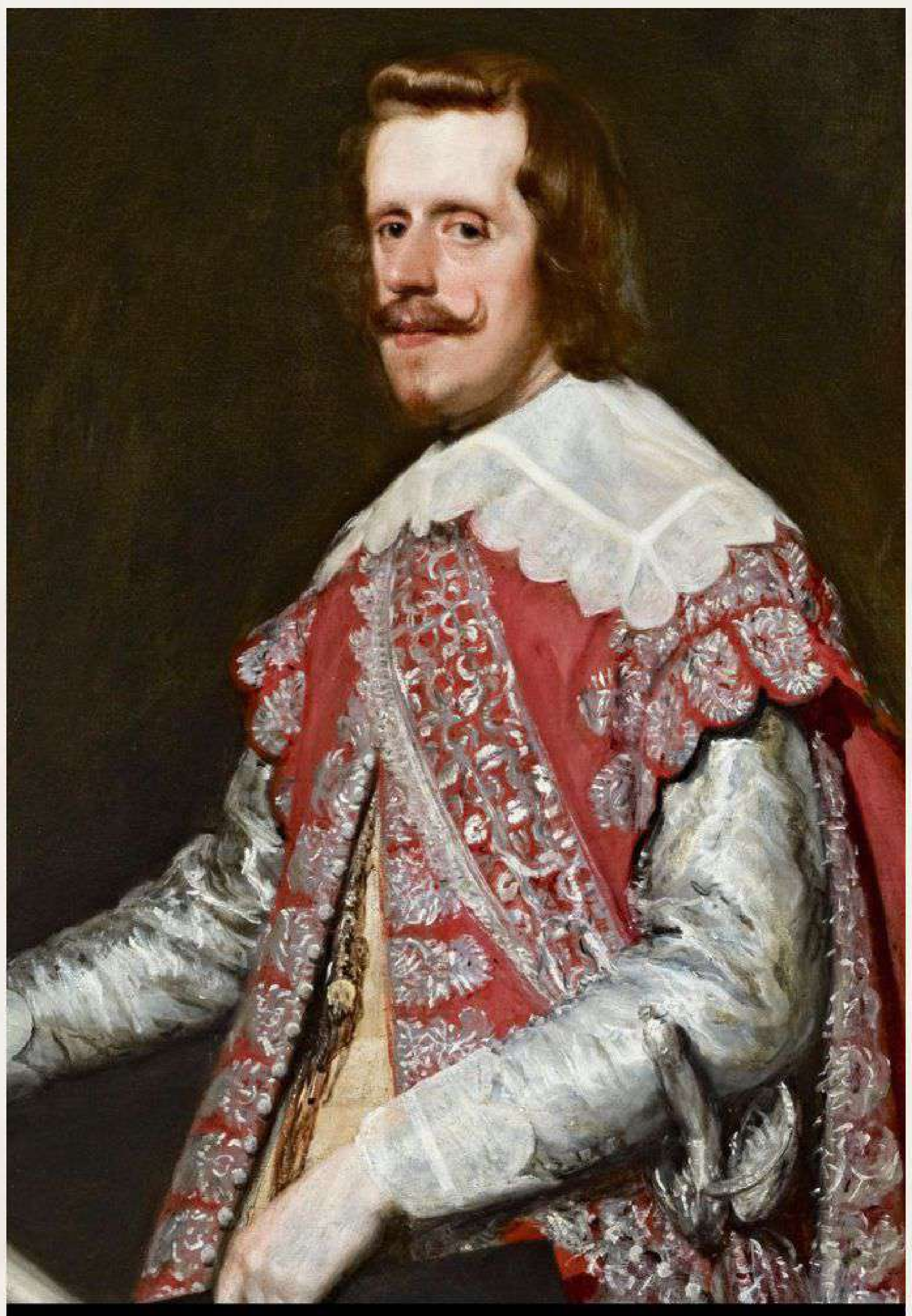


**This fanciful allegory represents the marriage of Louis and Maria Theresa, and the peace that their union brought about between Spain and France**

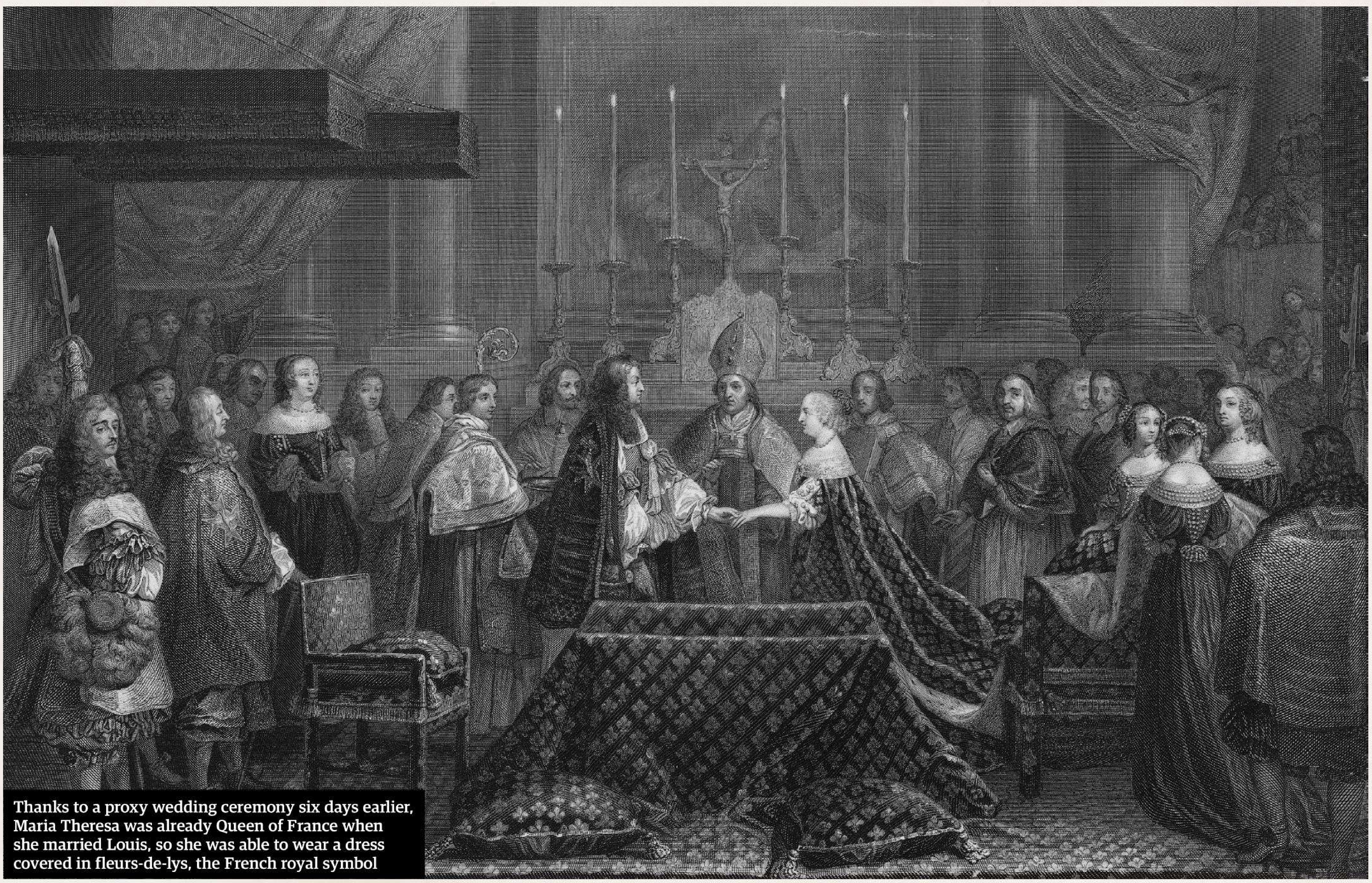
> *"Maria Therese never caused Louis any trouble… unlike his mistresses"*

had already had enough of strong-willed, politically active queens who meddled in matters that did not concern them. Maria Theresa's passivity and total lack of interest in the intrigue and drama of court life may have seemed rather dull to her new husband, who had a liking for intelligent, witty women who were able to make him laugh, but he was still able to appreciate her good qualities and would in time become exceedingly grateful for the fact that she never caused him any trouble… unlike some of his mistresses.

A few days later, on 7 June, Maria Theresa, accompanied by her father and their Spanish entourage, travelled to Pheasant Island, an uninhabited isle on the Bidasoa river, which lay directly between the borders of France and Spain. There, Louis and his court were waiting on the other side to take formal possession of Maria Theresa's person after she said an emotional farewell to her father, fully aware that she would almost certainly never see him again. The couple's



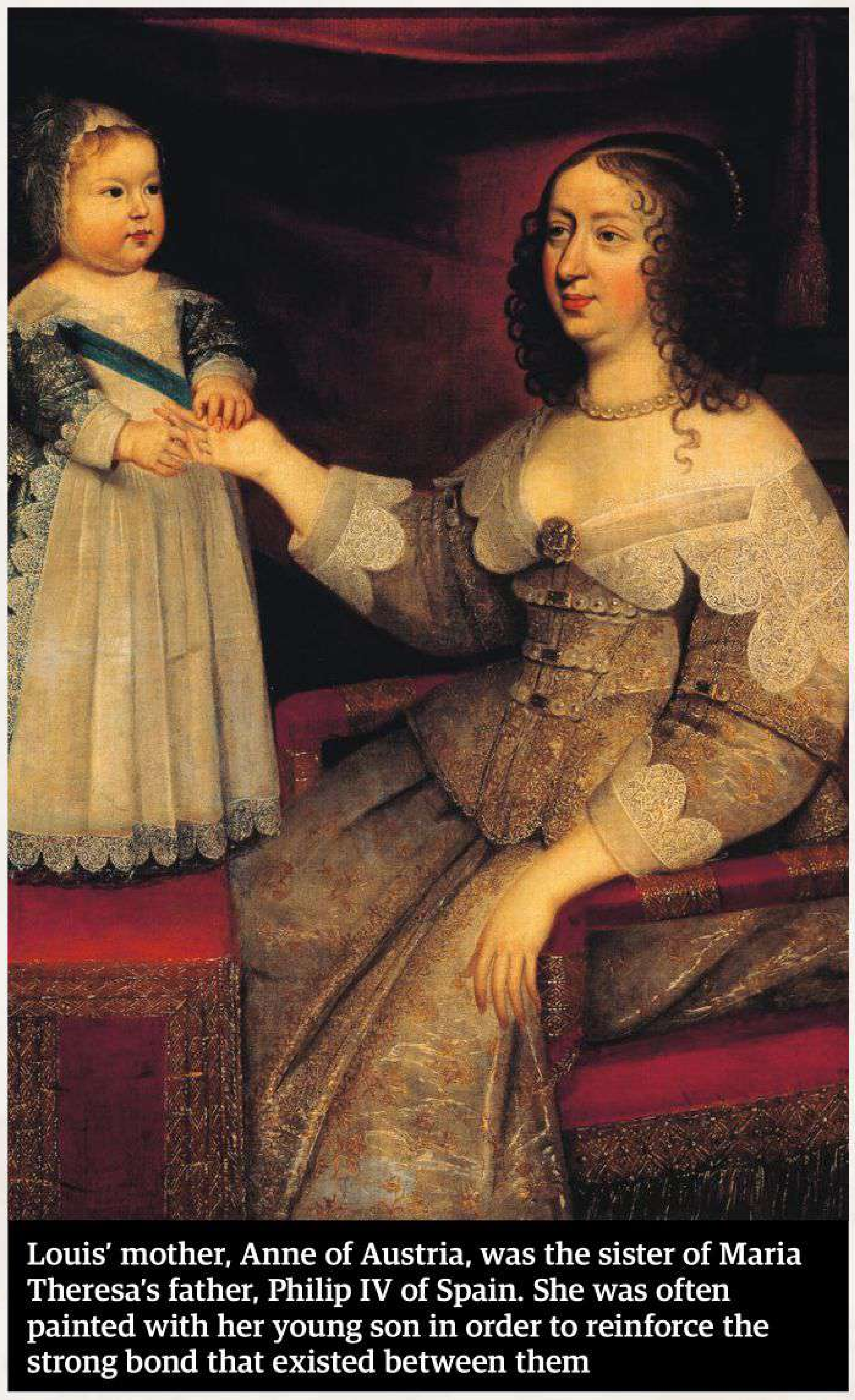
**Maria Theresa's father, Philip IV of Spain, is perhaps one of the most familiar monarchs in art history thanks to the many portraits he commissioned from his court painter, Diego Velázquez**



Thanks to a proxy wedding ceremony six days earlier, Maria Theresa was already Queen of France when she married Louis, so she was able to wear a dress covered in fleurs-de-lys, the French royal symbol

official wedding took place on 9 June in the rather modest 13th-century church of St John the Baptist in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, a town near Bordeaux. Louis looked extremely handsome in richly bejewelled black velvet, while his bride, who was five days his junior but looked even younger, wore a gown decorated with diamond fleurs-de-lys to reflect the fact that she was technically already the Queen of France since the proxy wedding on Spanish soil six days earlier. She came to her husband with the unbound hair of a virgin princess, although her blonde curls were so thick that it proved difficult to keep her crown in place. After the ceremony, the door that the newly married King and Queen of France passed through was ceremonially bricked up, apparently to symbolise the end of the troubles between France and Spain, but most likely also so that no other, less-exalted couple would ever be able to use it. A celebratory banquet followed the ceremony, after which the couple immediately retired to bed. To everyone's amazement, Maria Theresa appeared to be equally as keen as Louis to consummate the marriage and asked her maids to hurry up and get her undressed and into her nightdress for the ceremonial bedding, which involved the bed being blessed and the curtains pulled open so that witnesses could observe the couple in bed together. It is said that before they went to sleep that night, Maria Theresa made Louis promise that he would always sleep beside her every night and, although we don't know how true this story is, it appears that for the rest of their marriage, no matter what else he got up to at night, he always ended up in the same bed as his wife.

It took the royal party more than two months to return to Paris, where they were greeted by the huge crowds that had lined the streets to witness Maria Theresa's official royal entry to her new capital. The grand procession was led by a group of monks and priests, who carried crosses, wafted incense and chanted litanies as they marched ahead of hundreds of soldiers and courtiers, all dressed in their finest clothes. At the very heart of the procession was Louis, mounted on a splendid bay stallion, and his new wife Maria Theresa, looking tiny but resplendent in gorgeously embroidered cloth of gold, encrusted with diamonds and precious stones, as she rode past in a chariot pulled by six grey horses. Amongst the wealthy Parisians who watched the procession from the balconies of their mansions was Françoise d'Aubigné, who would many years later become Louis' secret second wife. "I don't think there could be a finer sight in all the world," she wrote the next day, rather enviously. "And the queen must go to bed tonight well content with the husband she has chosen."



Louis' mother, Anne of Austria, was the sister of Maria Theresa's father, Philip IV of Spain. She was often painted with her young son in order to reinforce the strong bond that existed between them

© Getty Images

## Princess Anne of England & William IV, Prince of Orange

14 March 1734

The Royal Chapel at St James's Palace was the scene of Princess Anne's wedding to her Dutch husband. The country counted the days with details published in newspapers. One reported that "the marriage… is to be conducted in the most splendid and magnificent manner imaginable". That certainly wasn't an understatement, with the wedding anthem composed by Handel.

©Getty

## 19 April 1770 (by proxy)

# Marie Antoinette & Dauphin Louis

Marie Antoinette's marital makeover is enough to give even the most committed Bridezilla nightmares

Written by Catherine Curzon

Few names in history are quite as evocative as Marie Antoinette. Frequently imagined strutting through the palace of Versailles, a galleon perched atop chandelier-skimming hair and with panniers so wide she filled a doorway, she has become one of the most recognisable figures in the history of France. She's also one of the most divisive, a woman who still retains the power to evoke either dreamy sighs or tooth gnashing, thanks to her love of largesse, fashion and the ultimate high life.

Yet long before she was queen of France, Marie Antoinette was the considerably less well-groomed Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria. A teen bride, her wedding preparations were enough to make even the most ardent revolutionary's eyes water.

Forget dashing princes, swooning princesses and happily ever afters, royal marriage in the 18th century was a serious diplomatic business. With the right match, empires could rise and fall, wars could be ended and the course of history might change forever.

Maria Antonia's shrewd and politically ambitious mother, Maria Theresa, had set her heart on an alliance between the Holy Roman Empire and the French Bourbon dynasty, and what better way than marriage? The obvious candidate among her daughters was young Maria Antonia, and once she had Louis, the dauphin of France, in her sights, nothing was going to stand in her way. With negotiations led by the French court's appointed representative, the Duc de Choiseul, there would be plenty of compromise and piles of cash needed to iron out the various points of contract, but for the young archduchess, the pains were more physical than political. Bringing with her an enormous dowry of 200,000 crowns, the bride-to-be made a tempting financial and dynastic prospect. Considerably less tempting were her looks, manners and wardrobe, and when the family of the groom turned a critical eye on the teenager, they were far from impressed.

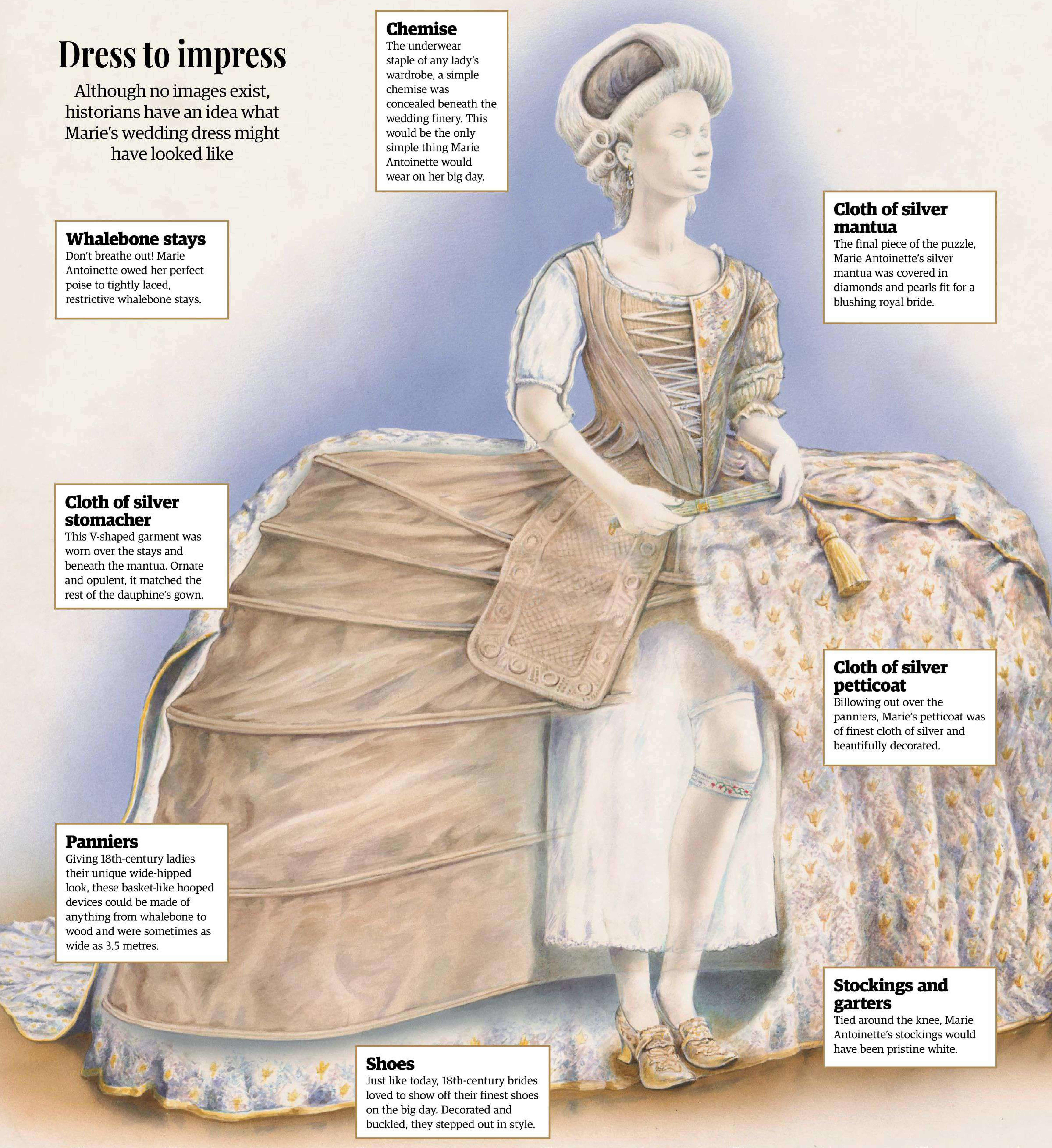
Despite her talent for music, Maria Antonia had received only a very limited education. With her unruly hair, girlish manner and rumpled clothes, she didn't look the part of a dauphine at all. Carefree and with no idea of manners and court etiquette, there seemed to be a lot of work to do. No longer would the 13-year-old be free to roam outdoors with her friends – the time had come for Archduchess Maria Antonia to grow up. Her transformation was entrusted to the Duchesse de Gramont, Choiseul's sister. When it came to French style, she knew exactly what Maria Antonia needed.

First on the agenda was clothes. It was a reasonably gentle start to the transformation and soon the carefree girl was learning to negotiate the world in the highly structured and elaborate gowns that were the height of French fashion. Dazzled by patterns, swatches, haberdashers and the finest dressmakers Paris had to offer, Maria Antonia's Austrian home became an outpost of the French dressmaking world. Chief among the challenges faced by the couturiers was convincing the young girl to be laced into whalebone stays. Stiff and restrictive, these uncomfortable undies were central to the foundation garments of her new look. She resisted, but eventually had no choice but to give

# *Marie Antoinette & Dauphin Louis*

# Dress to impress

Although no images exist, historians have an idea what Marie's wedding dress might have looked like



**Chemise**
The underwear staple of any lady's wardrobe, a simple chemise was concealed beneath the wedding finery. This would be the only simple thing Marie Antoinette would wear on her big day.

**Whalebone stays**
Don't breathe out! Marie Antoinette owed her perfect poise to tightly laced, restrictive whalebone stays.

**Cloth of silver mantua**
The final piece of the puzzle, Marie Antoinette's silver mantua was covered in diamonds and pearls fit for a blushing royal bride.

**Cloth of silver stomacher**
This V-shaped garment was worn over the stays and beneath the mantua. Ornate and opulent, it matched the rest of the dauphine's gown.

**Cloth of silver petticoat**
Billowing out over the panniers, Marie's petticoat was of finest cloth of silver and beautifully decorated.

**Panniers**
Giving 18th-century ladies their unique wide-hipped look, these basket-like hooped devices could be made of anything from whalebone to wood and were sometimes as wide as 3.5 metres.

**Stockings and garters**
Tied around the knee, Marie Antoinette's stockings would have been pristine white.

**Shoes**
Just like today, 18th-century brides loved to show off their finest shoes on the big day. Decorated and buckled, they stepped out in style.

in and, at the cost of comfort, achieved that perfect dauphine posture.

At this early stage in what would be a long and painful journey from playful girl to poised bride, the excitement and apprehension must have been overwhelming. However, even whalebone stays paled in comparison to the trial that awaited. After all, she could always look forward to escaping the stays at the end of a long day and drawing in a much-needed breath. When it came to more invasive procedures though, things could get a little more permanent, not to mention painful.

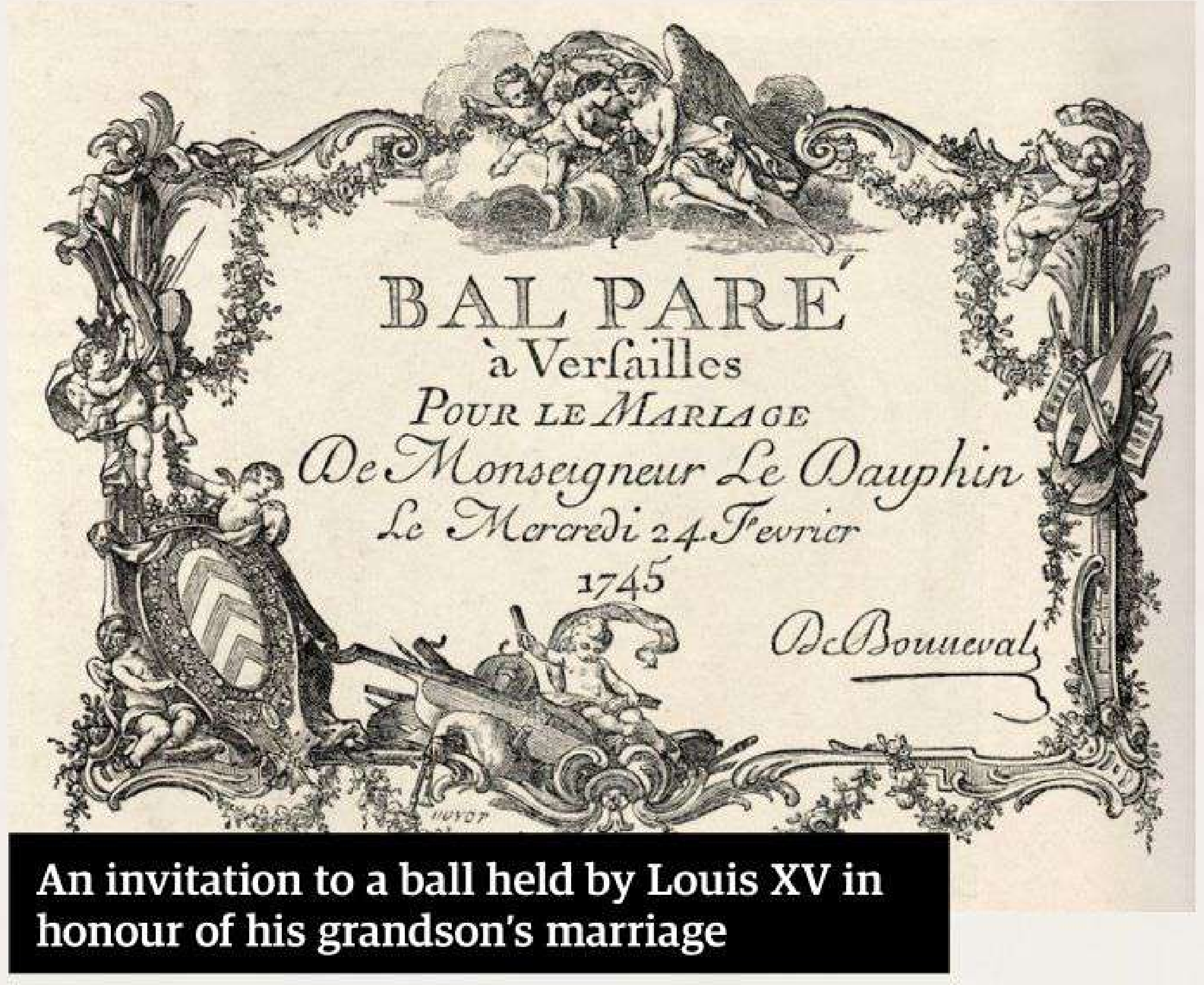
If changing Maria Antonia's wardrobe had been an inconvenience, then changing her looks would be nothing short of agonising. When the archduchess smiled, the representatives of the Bourbon court gave a collective intake of horrified breath at the sight of her crooked, far-from-perfect teeth. Still, the families were not about to let such a trifling matter stand in the way of the marriage. In 1768, society dentist Pierre Laveran was summoned to Vienna. He was saddled with the unenviable task of giving the archduchess a mouth fit for a French queen, and he knew just what was required: a few months in the grip of Fauchard's Bandeau.

> *"The Bourbon court gave a collective intake of horrified breath at the sight of her crooked, far-from-perfect teeth"*

Taking its name from its inventor – Pierre Fauchard, a pioneer in dental treatment – Fauchard's Bandeau was a very early form of brace made of precious metal. Shaped like a shallow horseshoe, it fit into the mouth of the unfortunate patient and was intended to reshape the dental arch. Along the device were perforations through which gold strands were threaded, and would be tied tightly onto the teeth to secure its position. So tightly fastened to the teeth was the device that, over time, the dental arch would be forced to reshape itself to fit the horseshoe shape of the metal frame. The result was straight teeth and the perfect royal smile.

Months of agonising procedures followed as the dental brace went about its work. Just as she had surrendered to the whalebone stays, the young archduchess had no choice but to endure the pain of this unflattering, invasive dental device with fortitude. Finally and much to the bride's relief, the French court declared themselves satisfied and the agonising bandeau was removed.

Now the bride certainly had a smile fit for Versailles, not to mention rooms stuffed with gowns, hats, shoes and jewels more suited for a poised dauphine than a teenage girl. Under the hawkish eye of the Duchesse de Gramont the physical transformation of Maria Antonia into Marie Antoinette was almost complete. All that remained were a few finishing touches here and there to tame her hair and perfect her make-up, but there was a rather bigger obstacle on the horizon.



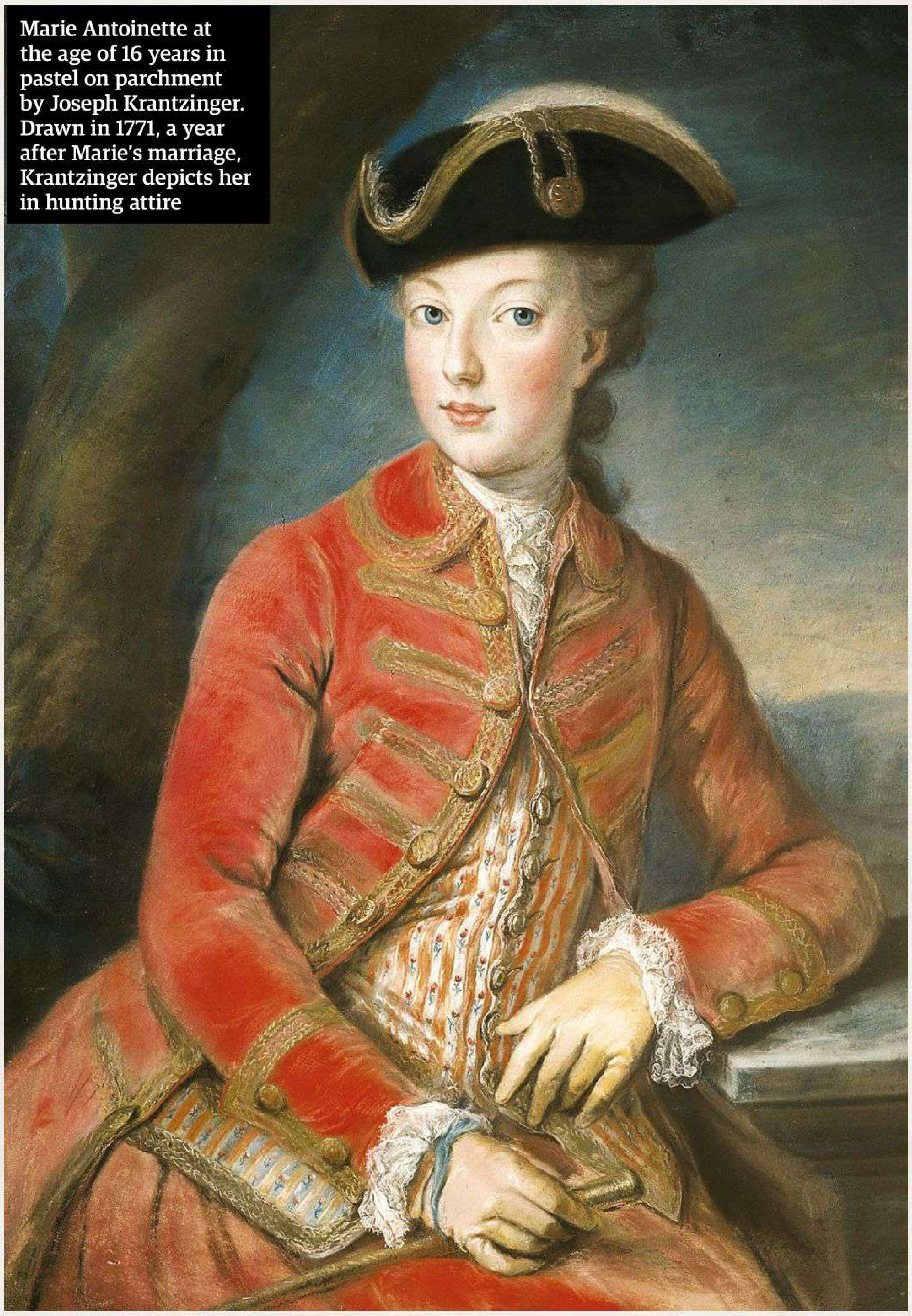
BAL PARÉ
à Verſailles
Pour le Mariage
De Monseigneur Le Dauphin
Le Mercredi 24 Fevrier
1745
De Bonneval

An invitation to a ball held by Louis XV in honour of his grandson's marriage

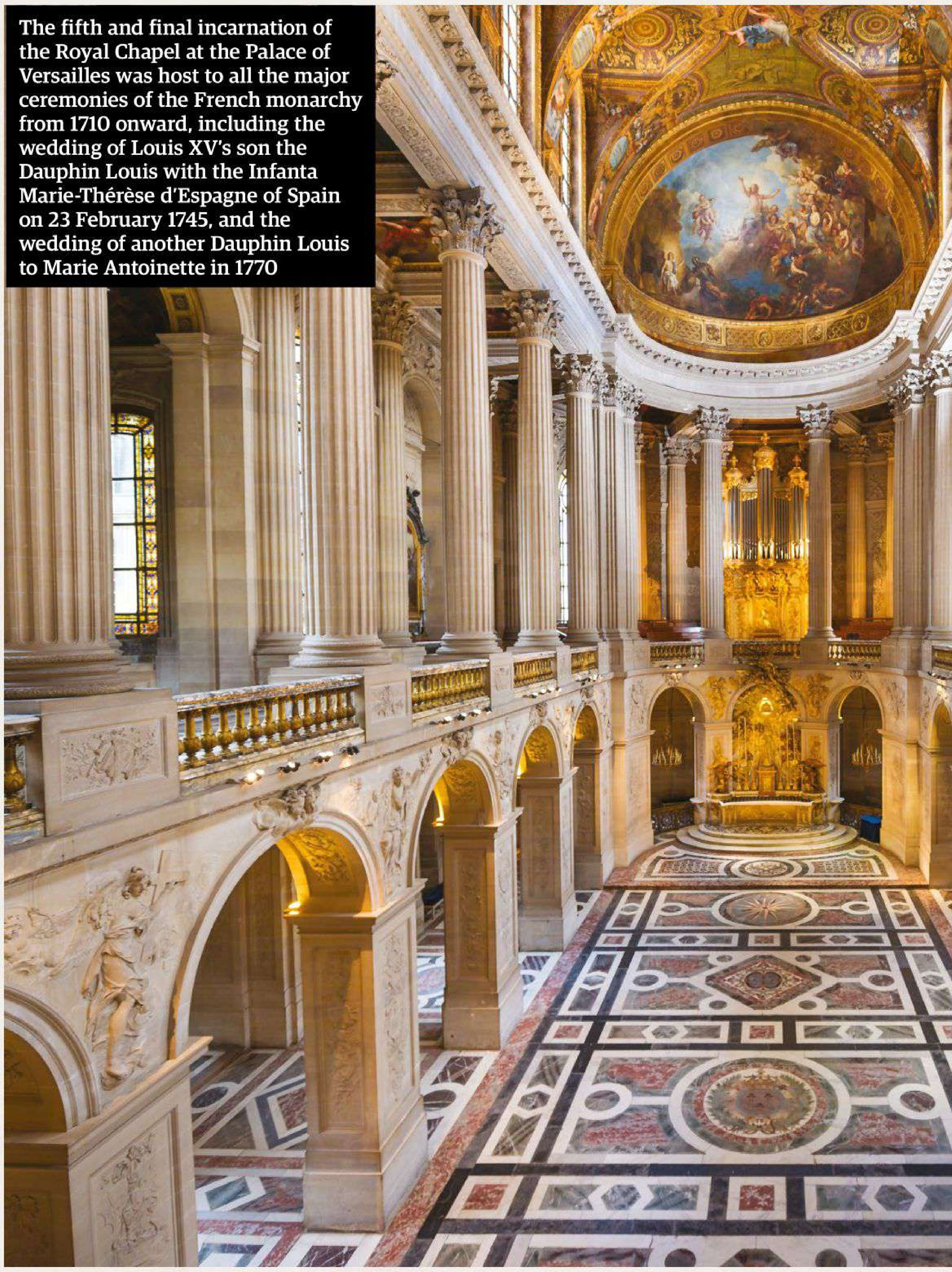
Far from the poised, dignified queen of her portraits, Maria Antonia cared little for the strict and arcane rules of etiquette that were so vital to a successful life in the Bourbon palaces. It wasn't a question of choice though; if she wanted to survive, she had to learn, and fast. In a court where etiquette and intrigue were the most valuable currency in a woman's arsenal, some serious and urgent improvement was required.

Before she became a candidate for the hand of the dauphin, Maria Antonia loved to spend her

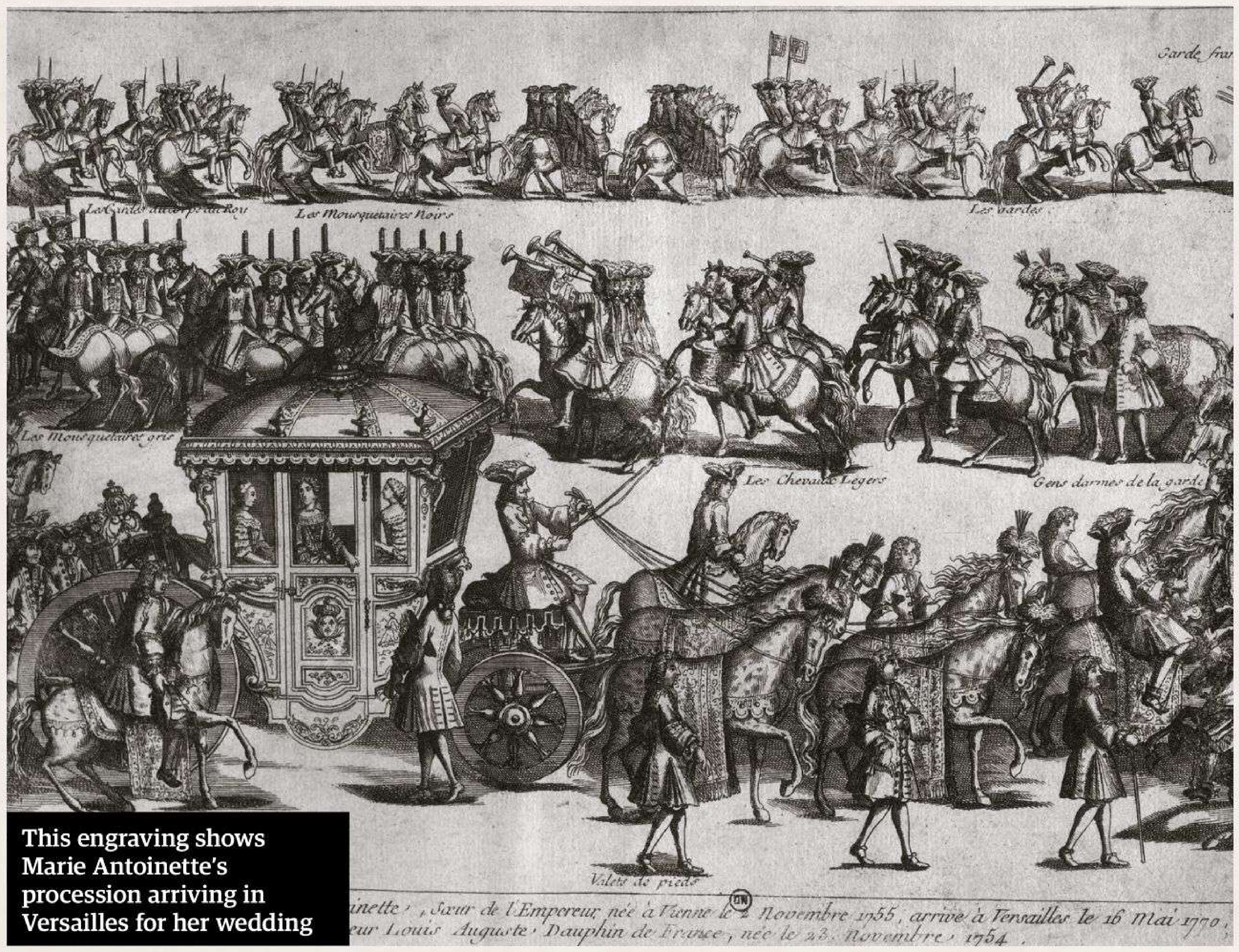
These shoes, belonging to Marie Antoinette, are typical of the tastes of the time



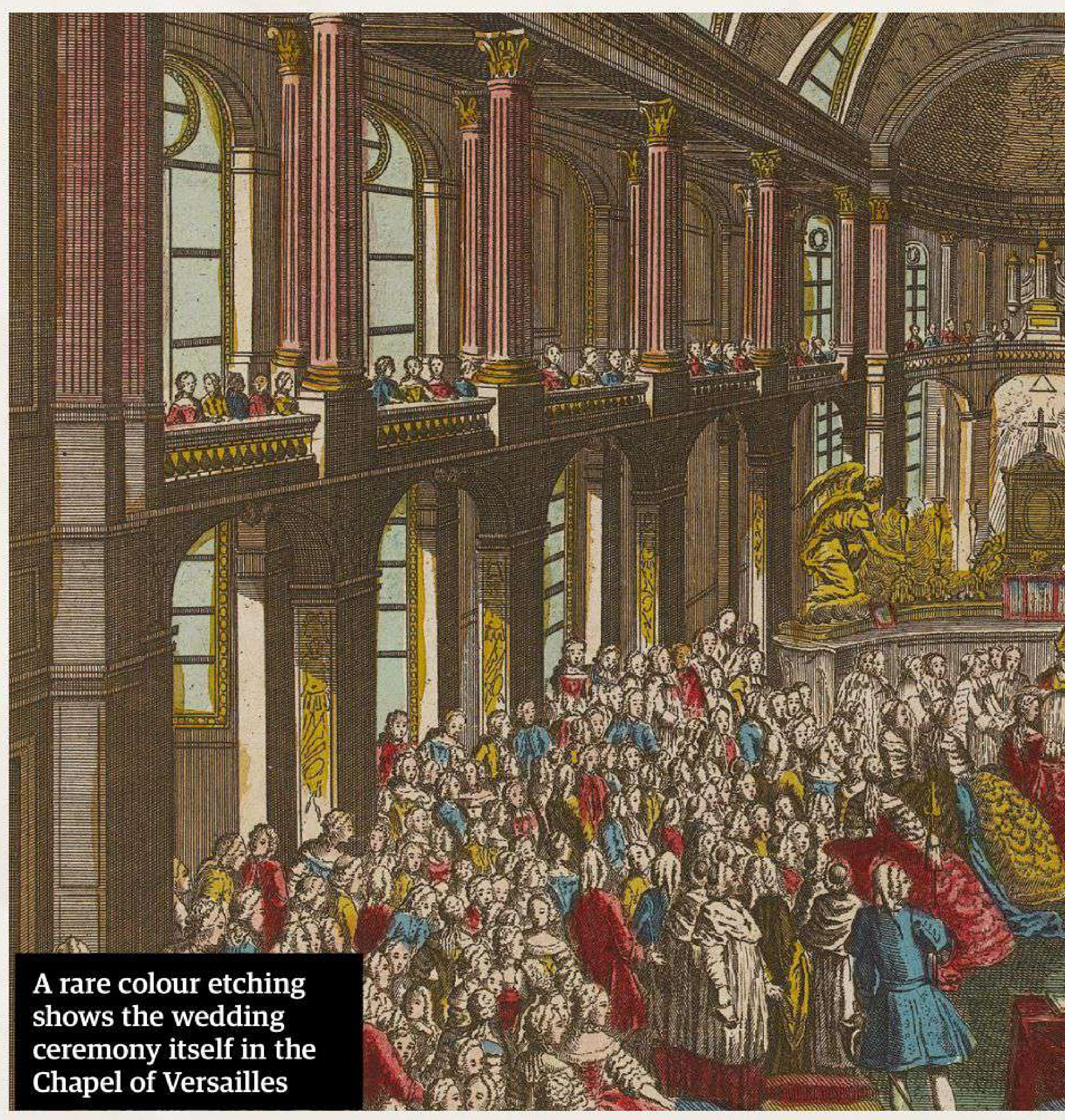
Marie Antoinette at the age of 16 years in pastel on parchment by Joseph Krantzinger. Drawn in 1771, a year after Marie's marriage, Krantzinger depicts her in hunting attire



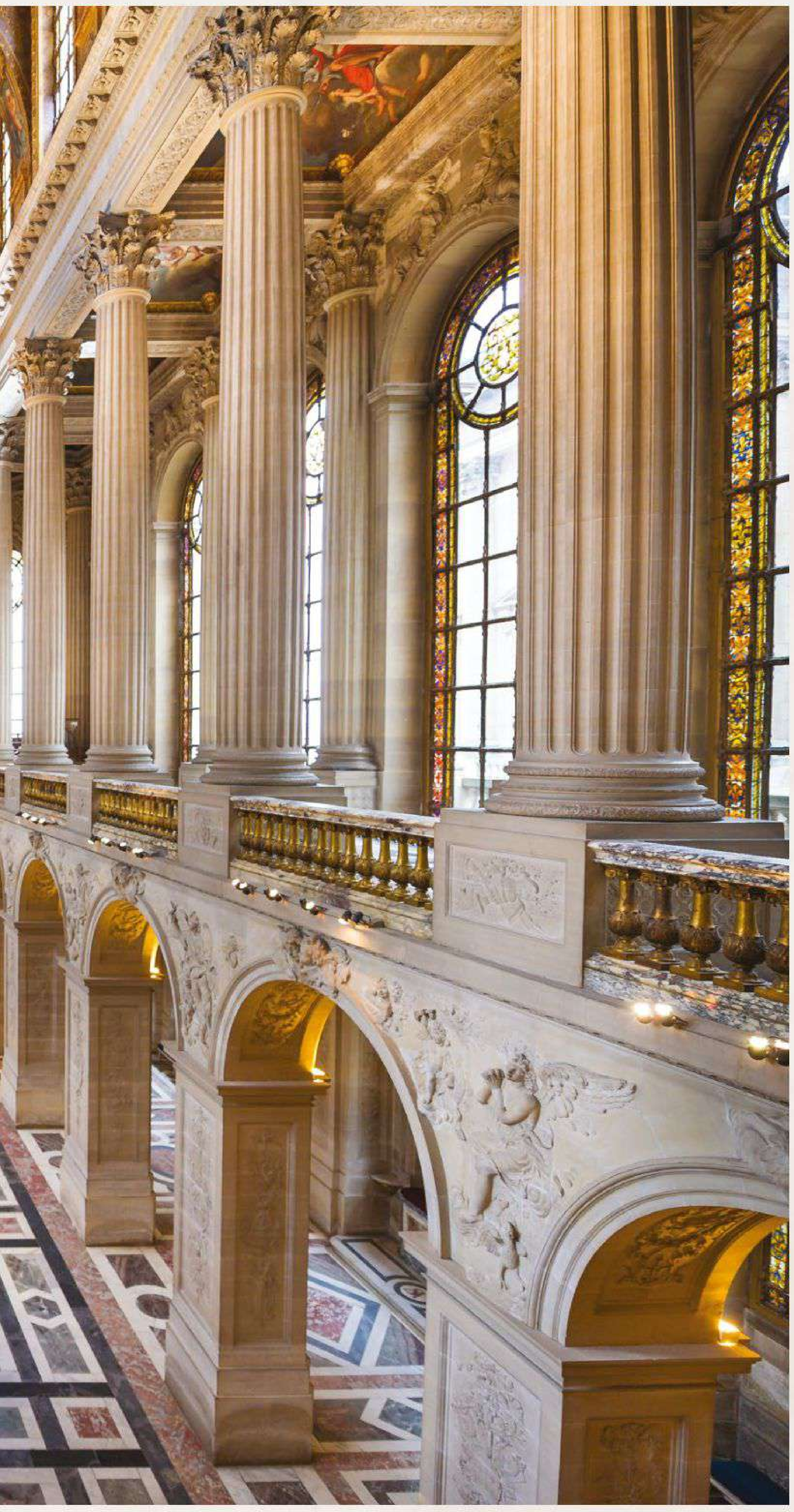
The fifth and final incarnation of the Royal Chapel at the Palace of Versailles was host to all the major ceremonies of the French monarchy from 1710 onward, including the wedding of Louis XV's son the Dauphin Louis with the Infanta Marie-Thérèse d'Espagne of Spain on 23 February 1745, and the wedding of another Dauphin Louis to Marie Antoinette in 1770

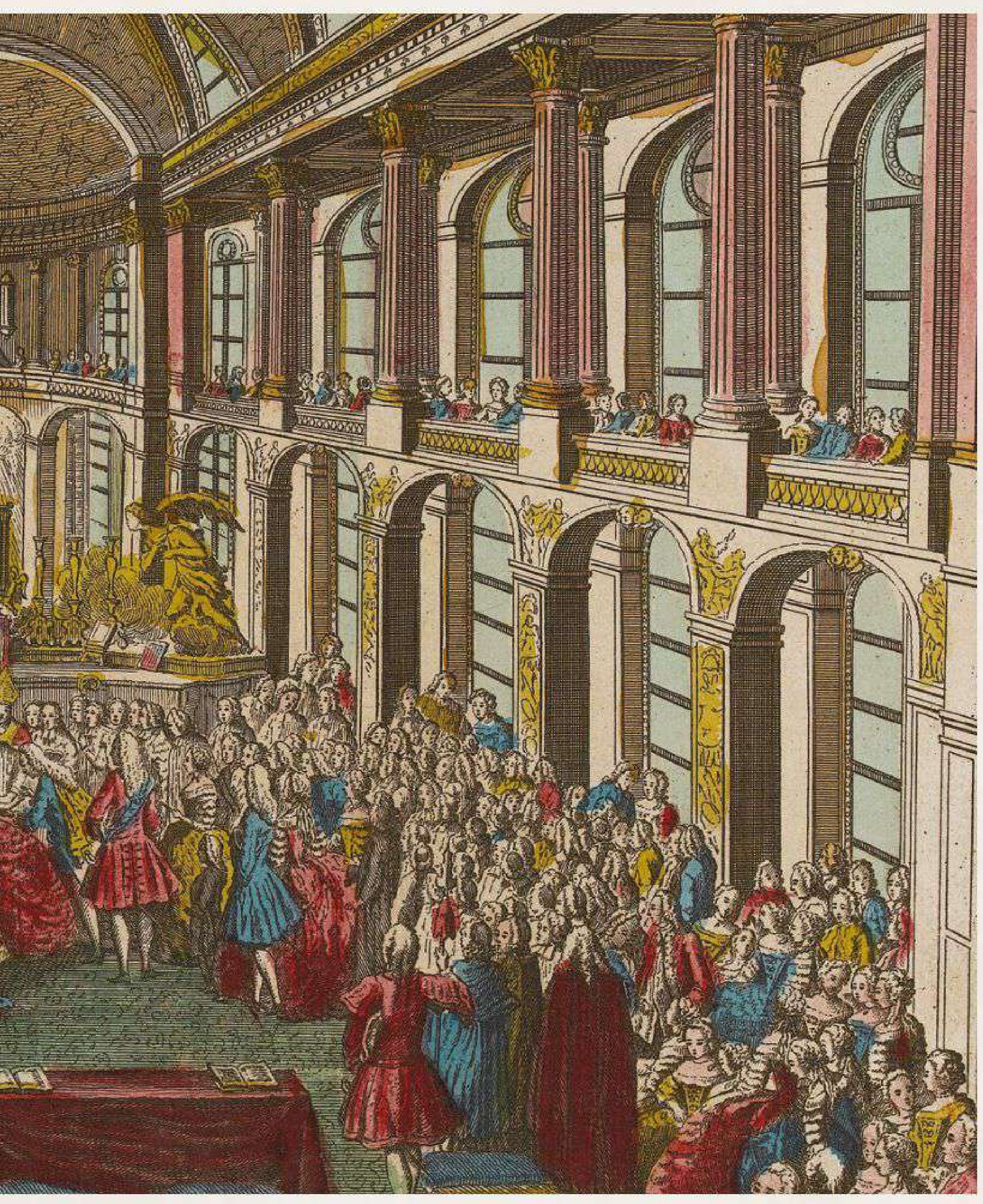

Garde fra
Les Gardes du corps du Roy
Les Mousquetaires Noirs
Les gardes
Les Mousquetaires gris
Les Chevaux Legers
Gens darmes de la garde
Valets de pieds
inette, Sœur de l'Empereur, née à Vienne le 2 Novembre 1755, arrive à Versailles le 16 Mai 1770,
eur Louis Auguste, Dauphin de France, née le 23. Novembre 1754.

This engraving shows Marie Antoinette's procession arriving in Versailles for her wedding



A rare colour etching shows the wedding ceremony itself in the Chapel of Versailles





free time with friends or playing instruments. She had little concern for court politics and the kind of rivalries that raged at Versailles, but her idyllic childhood was over and the time had come to learn etiquette. It must have seemed to Maria Antonia as though she would never be quite right for her new husband and the laborious and demanding process of becoming a Bourbon surely took its toll as the months went on.

Even the tiniest part of life in Paris was dictated by etiquette and the smallest mistake could result in immense social embarrassment. Eager to please the court, her husband-to-be and her fearsome mother, Maria Antonia did all she could to learn the intricate and confusing rules. It proved a long and difficult process, and even when she was dauphine, she continued to make mistakes. Once installed as queen, Marie Antoinette began to fight back against the politics and rules she hated but for now, that day was a long way off.

Etiquette was one element of her new life that the outgoing young lady would always struggle with. Even after her wedding, she was subjected to intense schooling under the watchful eye of Anne d'Arpajon, Comtesse de Noailles. The hugely experienced Anne had previously served queen Marie Leszczynska and was considered an expert without rival in courtly behaviour, so she was the perfect lady-in-waiting for the new bride. Marie Antoinette would come to despise her and even nicknamed her Madame Etiquette, seeing her as a figurehead for the unyielding propriety that she so abhorred.

> "He was determined to disguise her unfashionable high forehead while drawing attention to her slender neck"

With teeth and clothes just so and manners a work in progress, it was time to put the finishing touches into place. Sieur Larsenneur, the celebrated hairdresser who had created Madame de Pompadour's famous look, was summoned by to tame and tease Maria Antonia's unruly strawberry blonde curls. He was determined to disguise her unfashionable high forehead while drawing attention to her slender neck, which was considered one of her finest features. When Larsenneur finally put down his comb and unveiled the archduchess, she was the height of Parisian fashion. Now she looked the part, walked the part and even smiled the part: the wedding of the century could proceed.

On 19 April 1770, Maria Antonia and her brother, Ferdinand, arrived at the Augustinian Church in Vienna. Here she was married to Louis by proxy and the girl who entered the church as Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria left as Marie Antoinette, Dauphine of France. Just two days after the wedding, Marie Antoinette and an enormous procession of coaches left Austria to meet the French royal family; she would never see her homeland again. Aged 14, she was off to a new life, one where childhood pursuits would be forgotten and she would become, for better or worse, an icon of royal opulence.

The journey was arduous and long but, on 14 May, the young newlyweds finally laid eyes on one another for the first time. In a forest clearing near Compiègne, Marie Antoinette threw herself at the feet of her new husband and his grandfather, King Louis XV, declaring her devotion to them. The young dauphin gently raised his wife to stand and escorted her to his carriage, in which she made the remainder of the journey to Versailles.

The religious ceremony on 16 May was a dazzling affair. Held in the glittering splendour of the royal chapel of Versailles, Marie Antoinette's dress must have been magnificent. No expense was spared – it was made of cloth of silver and decorated with pearls and precious stones, dazzling beneath the palace chandeliers.

Although no pictures or fragments exist for us to marvel at today, society wedding gowns from the time give just a hint of how fabulous a creation it would have been. Unfortunately, Marie Antoinette had been measured for the gown months earlier and when it came to lace her into it, no amount of corsetry or willpower could make up for the fact that the ill-fitting dress just wouldn't fasten. Even with the laces at their tightest, the gown gaped open at the back and exposed the dauphine's shift to the illustrious crowd who had gathered to watch society's most anticipated wedding.

Though some of the wedding guests laughed behind their hands at the unthinkable sartorial blunder, the wedding was a roaring success. A crowd of 5,000 crammed into grandstands in the Hall of Mirrors and the cream of European society watched the procession pass by, witnessing the dawn of one of the most famous and iconic marriages in royal history.

For all its pomp and splendour, the day was plagued with events that were seen as ill omens, the first of which was the ill-fitting gown. Even worse, when Marie Antoinette sat down to sign the marriage register, a blot of ink dripped onto the page and obscured part of her name. Throughout the wedding day a storm raged that was fierce enough to cancel planned public celebrations, battering the palace walls and windows. When a celebration was eventually held weeks later, strong winds and fireworks resulted in an inferno that claimed many lives – one more terrible omen for the royal marriage.

Still, the day itself was hailed as a great occasion, and after a day of feasting and parties, the newlyweds were escorted in time-honoured tradition to the marital bed. Here they fell into an exhausted slumber, with the business of producing an heir left for another time, far in the future.

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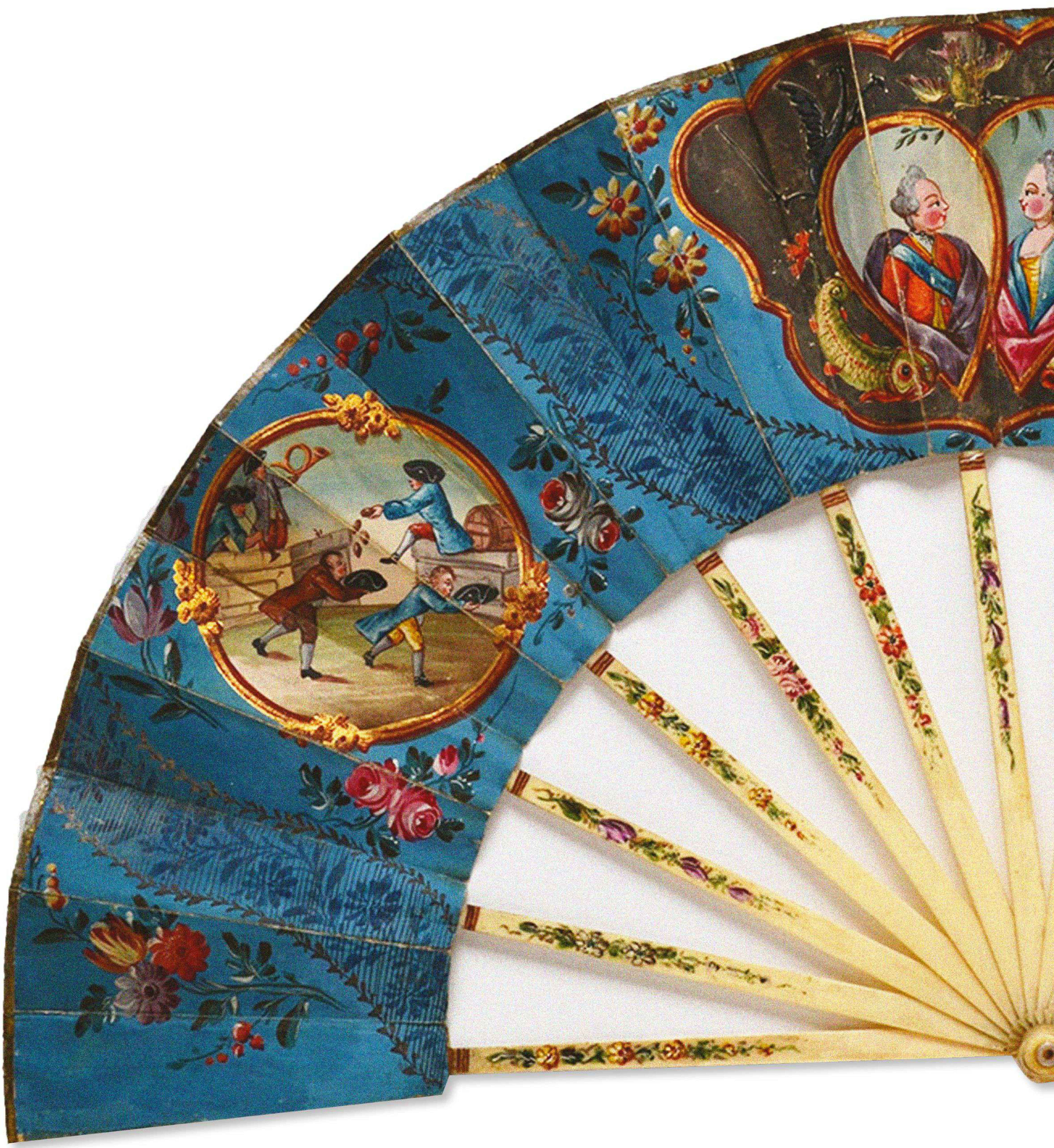
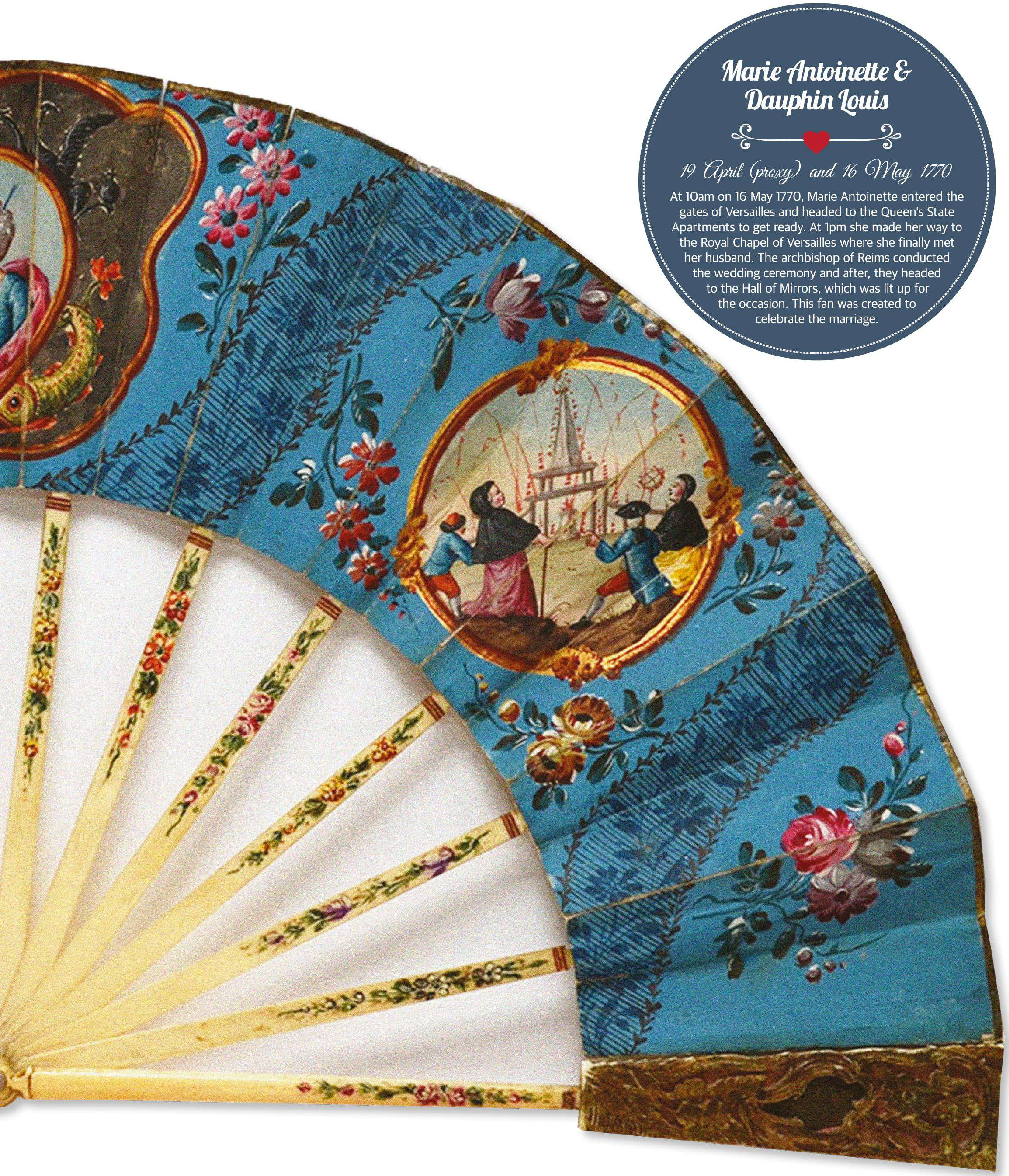




## Marie Antoinette & Dauphin Louis

*19 April (proxy) and 16 May 1770*

At 10am on 16 May 1770, Marie Antoinette entered the gates of Versailles and headed to the Queen's State Apartments to get ready. At 1pm she made her way to the Royal Chapel of Versailles where she finally met her husband. The archbishop of Reims conducted the wedding ceremony and after, they headed to the Hall of Mirrors, which was lit up for the occasion. This fan was created to celebrate the marriage.

©Getty

2 April 1810

# Napoleon I & Marie Louise

Despite the desperate efforts of his wife, Napoleon was still lacking a legitimate male heir to inherit his vast empire – so it was time to marry another

**Written by Melanie Clegg**

Napoleon and Joséphine were married in a modest ceremony on 9 March 1796, just two days before Napoleon left her behind in Paris to invade Italy with his newly acquired army. At the time people thought that Joséphine, a sophisticated aristocratic widow whose first husband had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, had married beneath her, but their roles were very quickly reversed and within just a few years she had been relegated to a secondary role in the relationship, apparently happy to play the submissive wife.

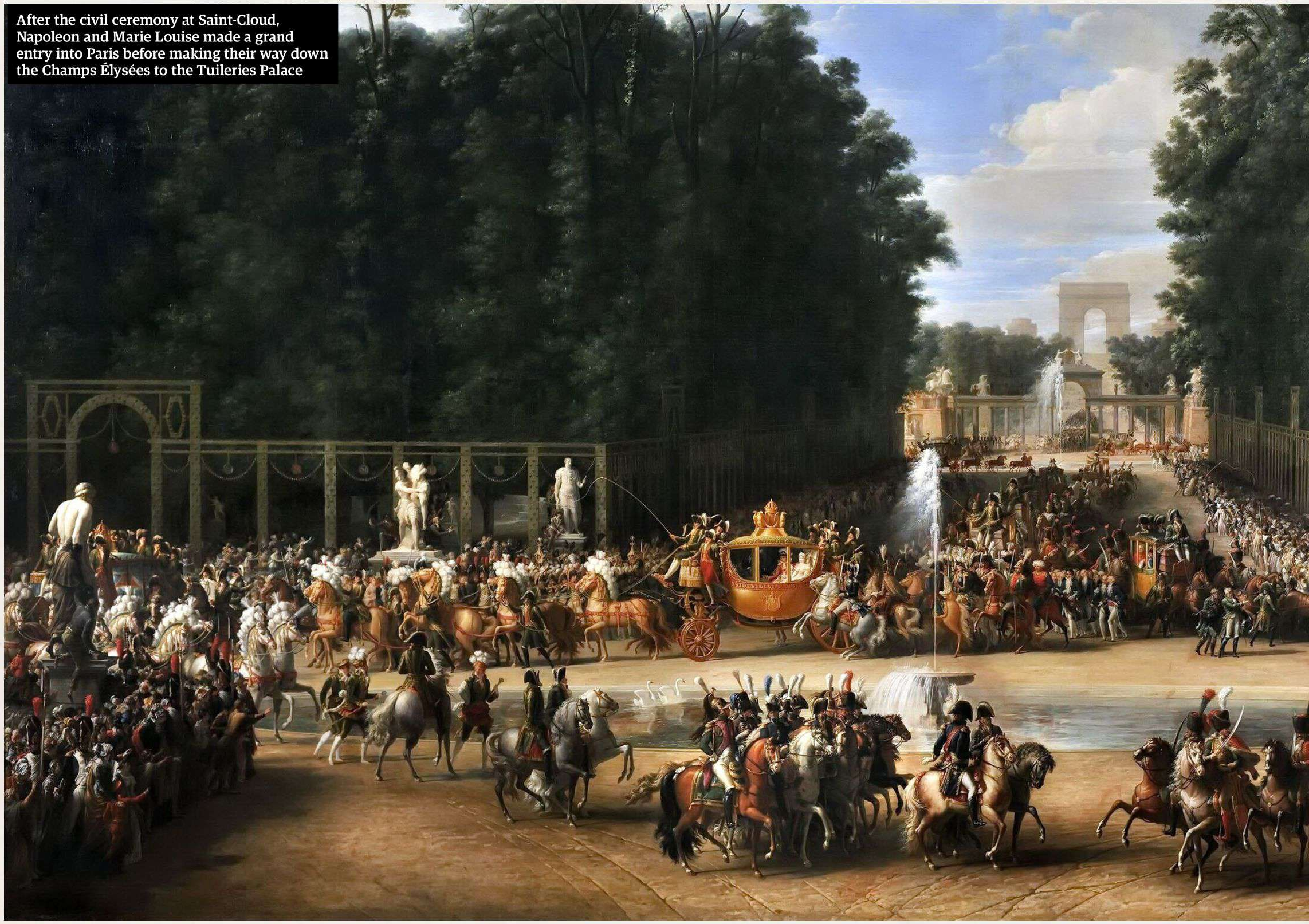
Although Napoleon had originally been completely infatuated by Joséphine, who found his ardour rather embarrassing and could barely even be bothered to reply to his frequent love letters, his feelings for her significantly cooled after he was presented with evidence that she had taken a lover while he was on campaign in Egypt. Although they were eventually reconciled, he would no longer be faithful to her. While outwardly harmonious, their marriage fell into further difficulties when Joséphine, who was six years older than her husband, failed to conceive a child, despite medical assistance. As she already had two children by her first marriage, she was able to convince her husband that the fault lay with him – a ruse that quickly fell apart when one of his mistresses became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Although there was some doubt about the child's parentage, due to the fact that Napoleon's brother-in-law had also been sleeping with the same woman, Napoleon still took this as a sign that he was fertile and began to secretly make plans for a divorce. It would still be quite a while before he put them into action, though, for he still loved his wife and couldn't yet bring himself to leave her.

However, when Napoleon was crowned emperor of the French in December 1804, his impatience to have a male heir only increased as he planned to create a new ruling dynasty that would be equally as powerful and magnificent as the Bourbon monarchs that had been toppled from the throne during the Revolution. Now aged 41 and aware that time was beginning to run out, Joséphine desperately did everything that she could to prevent the now-inevitable divorce, even persuading Napoleon to make her grandson Napoleon Charles, the son of her daughter Hortense and Napoleon's brother Louis, his heir. However, when the boy died of croup in 1807, Napoleon refused to make his younger brother (who would later succeed as Napoleon III) his successor, instead hinting that he intended to divorce Joséphine and start his own family.

The painful situation dragged on until November 1809, when Napoleon finally informed a devastated Joséphine that he wanted to end their marriage and that it was in fact her duty to step aside and let him produce an heir to the throne. The couple were divorced in a grand ceremony on 10 January 1810, with most of the court there to witness Joséphine's capitulation. Although Napoleon was genuinely distressed to part with the wife that he had loved for nearly 14 years, he quickly seemed to recover and was soon busily looking for another wife.

As the conqueror of Europe and newly minted emperor of the French, he was determined right

Georges Rouget's magnificent 1811 painting of the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise was deliberately intended to mirror David's famous painting of Napoleon's coronation with his first wife, Joséphine


After the civil ceremony at Saint-Cloud, Napoleon and Marie Louise made a grand entry into Paris before making their way down the Champs Élysées to the Tuileries Palace

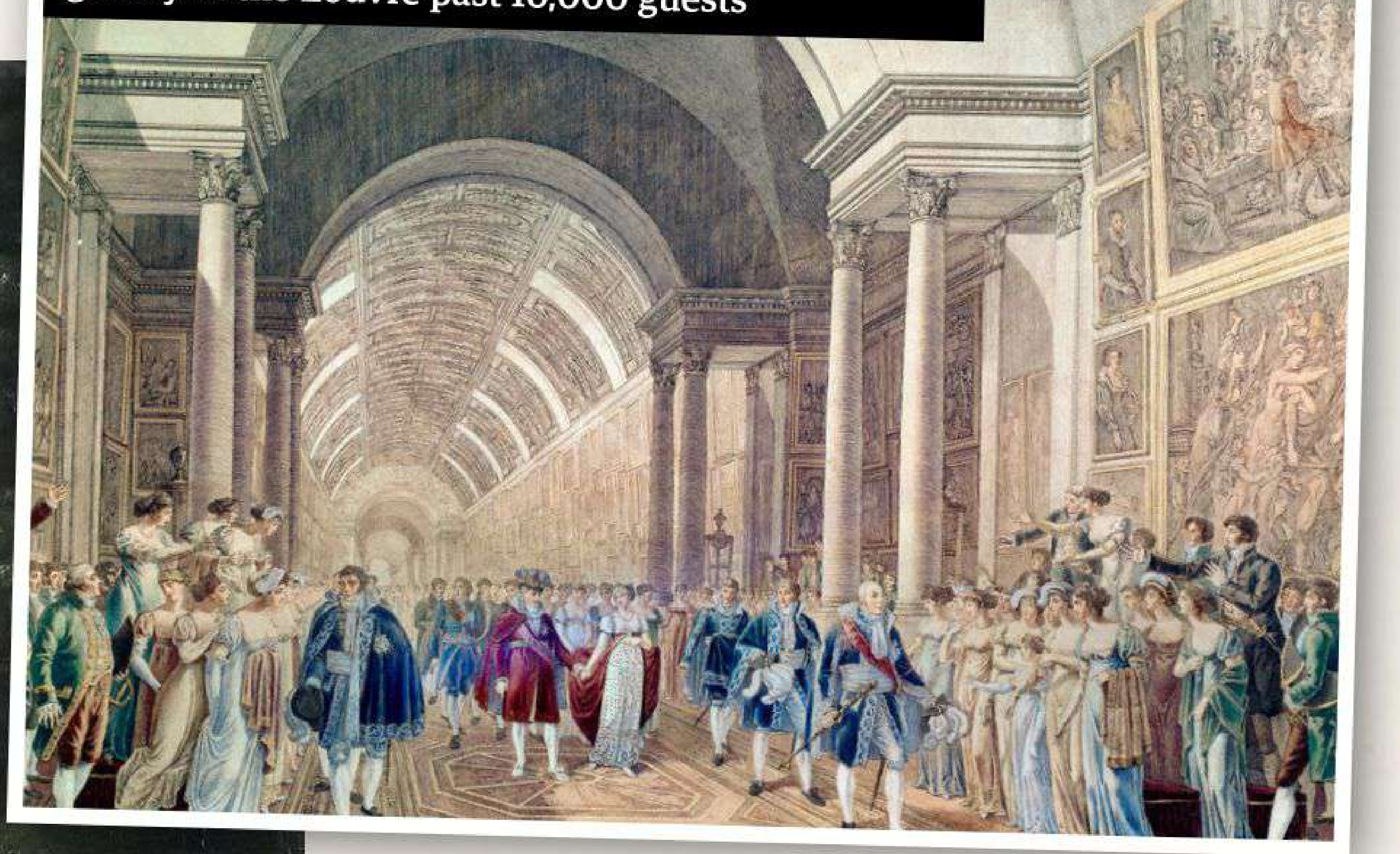
> "He was already busying himself organising a magnificent wedding"

from the very start to make the grandest match possible. He was also naturally keen that his future bride should be young and come from fertile stock, shocking his courtiers by rather ungallantly referring to her as a "walking womb". It quickly became clear that there were really only two contenders – the 15-year-old Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna of Russia, the pretty younger sister of Tsar Alexander I, and 18-year-old Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria, daughter of Emperor Francis II, who was less pretty but known to be shy, biddable and, most importantly, from famously fertile stock.

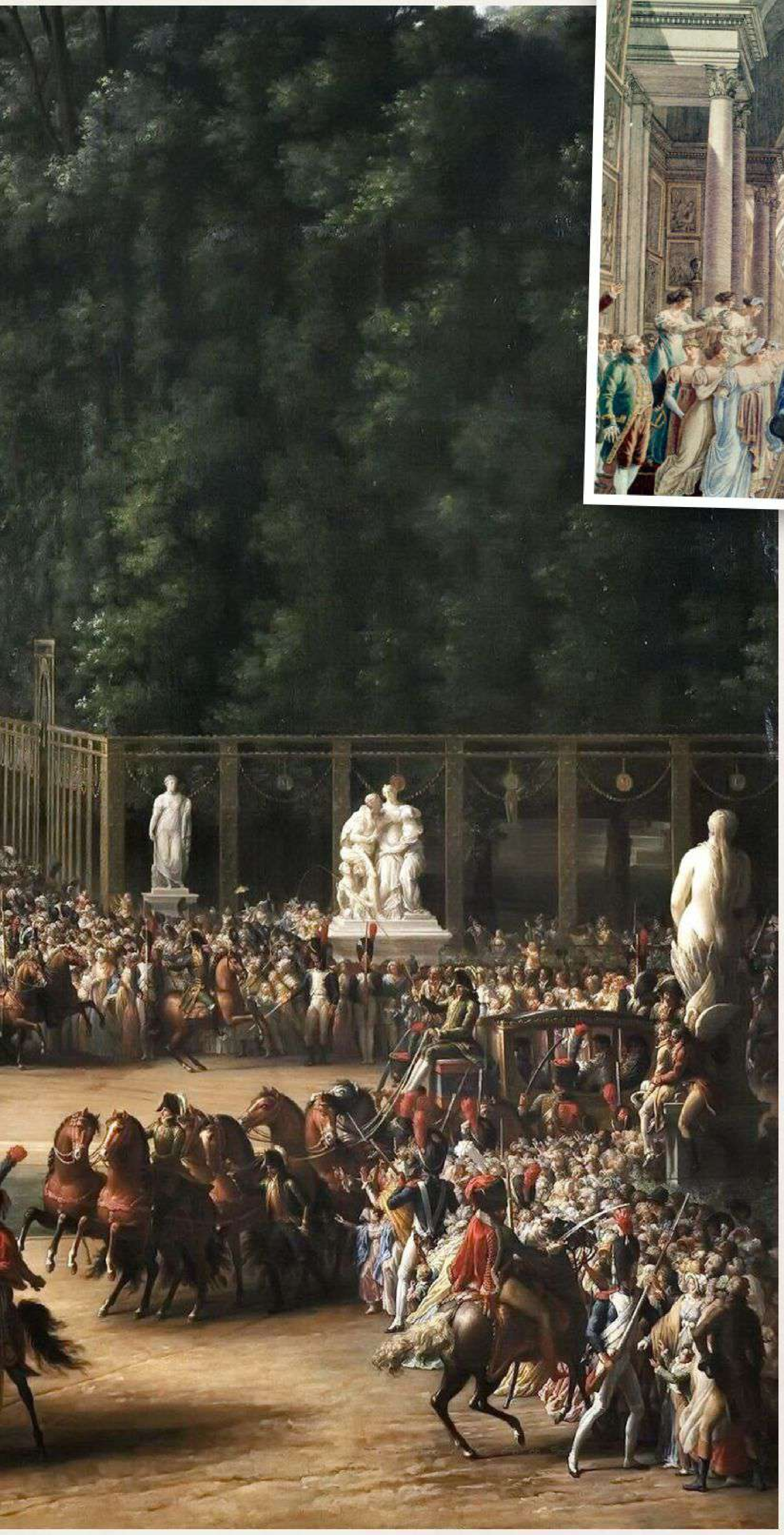
Initially, Napoleon preferred the Russian match, but he became impatient and swiftly changed his mind when Tsar Alexander, who had no desire to see his sister married to the French emperor, failed to respond in what Napoleon considered to be a timely manner to his proposal. Insulted by Alexander's hesitation, Napoleon, with his usual lack of tact, despatched his step-son Eugène de Beauharnais to the Austrian embassy in Paris to ask for the hand of Marie Louise – along with a demand that a decision should be made immediately and the contract signed within 24 hours. The unfortunate Austrian ambassador, the Prince von Schwarzenberg, desperately tried to buy some time so that he could secure the agreement of the emperor but was forced to give in and accept the proposal, hoping that his decision would not mean the end of his diplomatic career.

When Marie Louise was first informed that Napoleon had opened marriage negotiations with her father, she was horrified. As great-niece of the doomed Marie Antoinette, she understandably had no desire whatsoever to go to France. On a more personal level she had been raised to think of Napoleon as a crass, low-born parvenu and the monstrous despoiler of Europe. The very idea of being married to such a man and then having to reign over the French – a people that the Austrian royal family regarded as perfidious, violent rabble – filled her with dread. She was also very fond of her family and was well aware that if she left for France, as her great-aunt had done 40 years earlier, there was very little chance that she would ever be able to return home to Austria or even see any of them ever again.

However, Marie Louise had been raised to be entirely obedient to the wishes of her father and so made no argument when she was informed that the marriage would definitely be going ahead, commenting only that "I wish only what my duty commands me to wish". Perhaps she would have felt more favourably disposed towards her intimidating fiancé if she had known that he was already busying himself organising a magnificent wedding, even supervising the creation of a sumptuous bridal trousseau that included 64 new dresses from Joséphine's favourite designer, Leroy, as well as exquisite jewels, such as a diamond and emerald parure (a jewellery set that comprised a

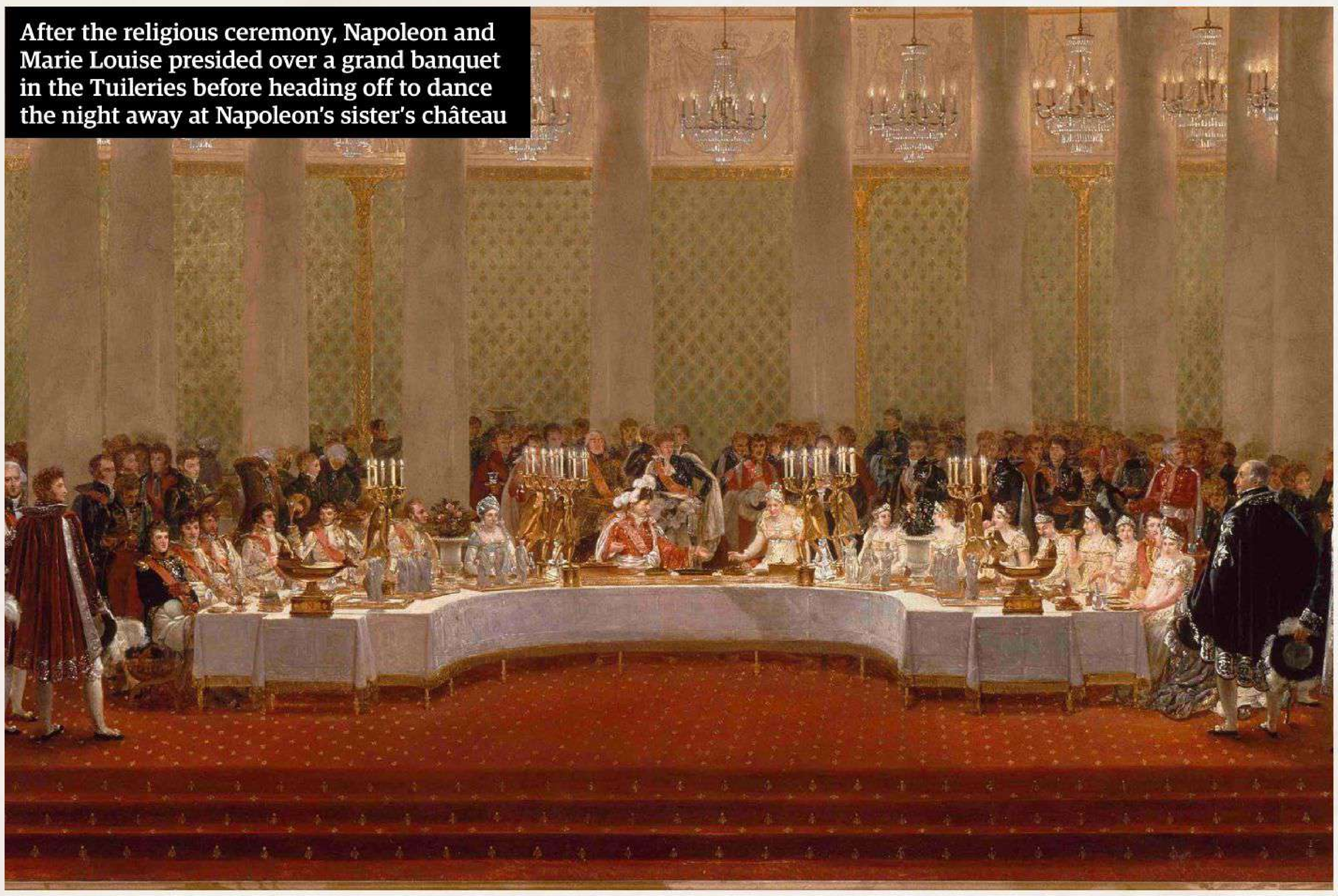


Napoleon was keen that his second wedding should be as magnificent as possible so arranged that they should walk in a great procession down the grand gallery of the Louvre past 10,000 guests



tiara, necklace, earrings and hair comb) that was valued at over 3 million francs. At the same time, he had Joséphine's old apartments redecorated in "virginal white" for his new wife and even, rather optimistically, ordered some miniature uniforms for the son that he felt absolutely certain they were going to have together. After spending the last decade placing his relatives on European thrones and marrying them into various royal houses, it was now Napoleon's turn to make the grandest royal marriage of all – and he was determined to do it in style.

The magnificent proxy wedding took place in the Augustinian Church next to the Hofburg Palace in Vienna on 11 March 1810 with the bride's uncle Archduke Karl of Austria standing in for Napoleon. Two days later, Marie Louise left Vienna, perhaps forever, following roughly the same route to France that Marie Antoinette had taken in 1770 and being richly entertained by royal relatives and the dignitaries of every town that she passed through. At Braunau, on the border between Austria and Germany, she was met by a French party headed by Marshal Berthier, the Comte de Laborde, and her husband's sister Caroline Murat, the queen of Naples. It was those two who oversaw



After the religious ceremony, Napoleon and Marie Louise presided over a grand banquet in the Tuileries before heading off to dance the night away at Napoleon's sister's château

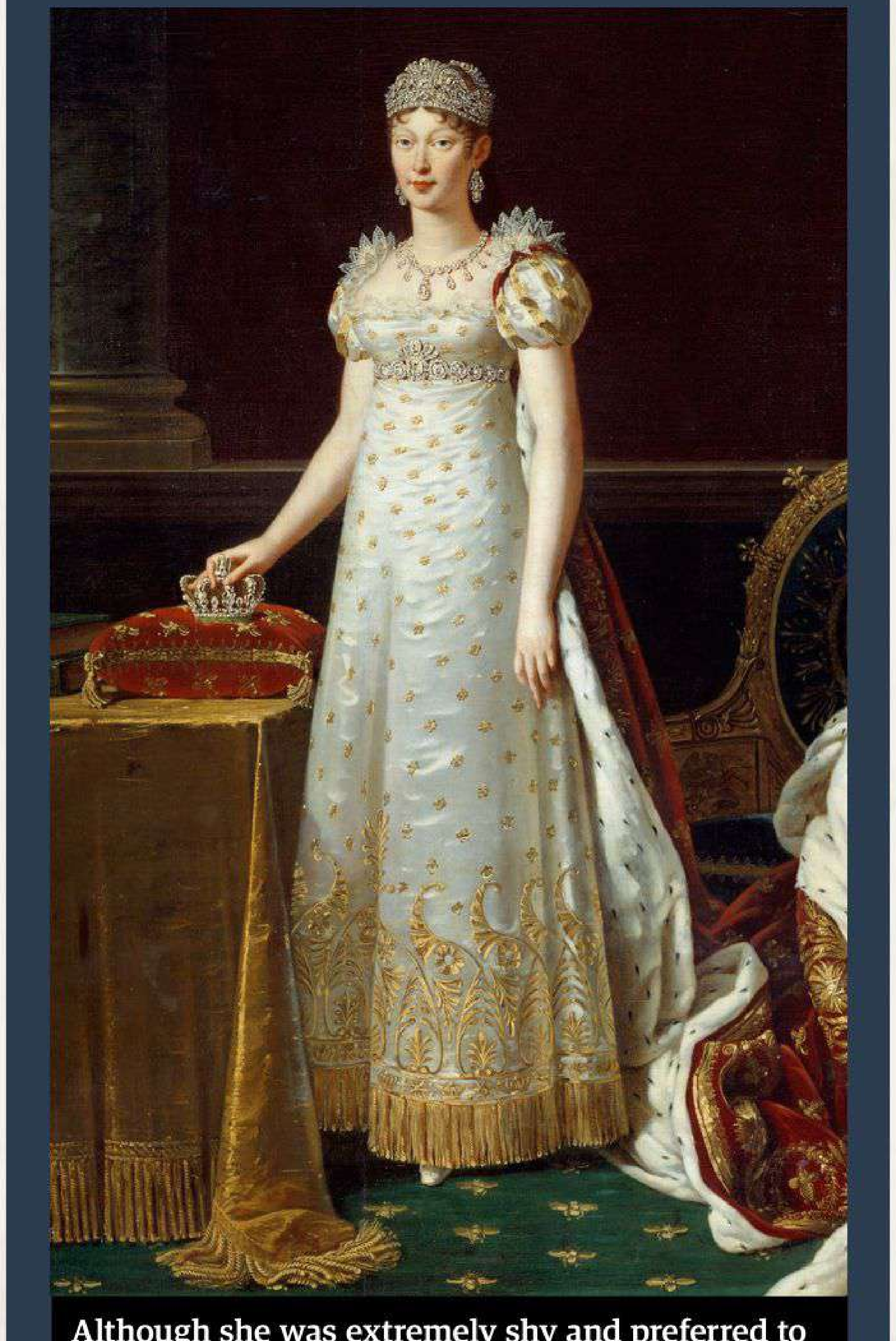
## Marie Louise of Austria

### The shy and awkward archduchess was constantly compared to Napoleon's sophisticated first wife, Joséphine

Marie Louise was born in the Hofburg Palace in Vienna on 12 December 1791 and was the first child of the Archduke Francis of Austria, a nephew of Marie Antoinette, and his wife Maria Theresa of Naples and Sicily, who was also his first cousin. Francis succeeded his father as Holy Roman emperor a year after Marie Louise was born and she would consequently spend her childhood in the magnificent Viennese palaces that were owned by the Habsburg dynasty.

Although she had been raised to hate the French, thanks to the fate of her great-aunt Marie Antoinette, she was nonetheless thoroughly tutored in the French language and would also become fluent in English, Italian, Latin and Spanish. Her marriage to Napoleon would be surprisingly happy, especially as she presented him with his much-longed-for son on 20 March 1811, almost exactly a year after their first meeting.

She returned to Vienna after her husband's final defeat in 1814 and was given the title duchess of Parma. After Napoleon's death in 1821, she married her lover, Count Adam von Neipperg, with whom she had secretly already had three children.

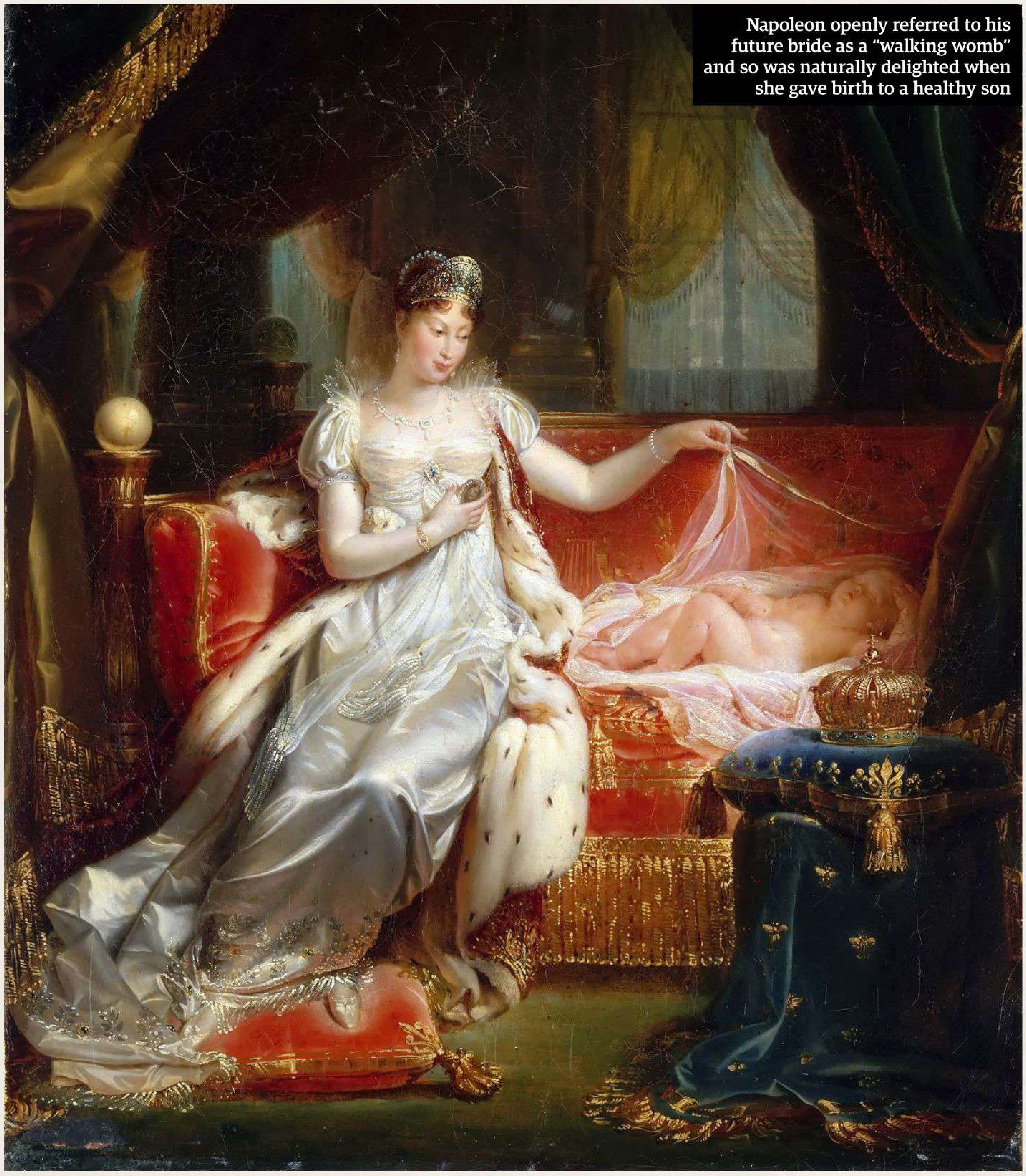


Although she was extremely shy and preferred to remain out of the public eye as much as possible, Marie Louise looks every inch an empress in this 1814 portrait by Robert Lefevre the traditional handing-over ceremony, during which Marie Louise was stripped of every Austrian possession and made to change into an entirely French outfit before formally joining the French for the rest of her journey.

The new empress disliked Caroline on sight, while for her part Napoleon's sister reported back to Paris that she liked Marie Louise very much and that although she was not very pretty, she had "charming blonde hair, hands and feet, a cultivated mind and dignified bearing; all in all she was very amiable and sweet". They travelled together through Germany, visiting Munich and Stuttgart, where they were entertained by the king of Württemberg, before continuing on to Strasbourg. Napoleon was almost beside himself with impatience as he waited for his bride's arrival, even if he was receiving reports that she was only really pretty "from a distance" and, worse still, significantly taller than him. "I don't care if she is pretty," he declared. "So long as she is kind and gives me healthy sons then I will love her as if she is the most beautiful girl in the world."

On 27 March, a rainy miserable day, Napoleon and Marie Louise met for the first time at the Château de Compiègne near Paris, with the new empress immediately winning her husband's heart by remarking that he was much better looking than his portrait. The couple were supposed to preside over a grand court gathering that evening but instead the always impatient Napoleon had Marie Louise taken up to her rooms and then soon after followed her in order to consummate their marriage as quickly as possible. The next morning he would emerge looking extremely pleased with himself, while Marie Louise was apparently not at all dismayed by his ardent behaviour.

The civil wedding, which had been required by French law since the Revolution, took place in the lovely old palace of Saint-Cloud on 1 April and was attended by the entire court and imperial family, including Joséphine's children Eugène and Hortense. Joséphine herself was not invited, and indeed was completely banned from appearing at court by Marie Louise. However, she tactfully said that she was pleased that Napoleon was marrying



**Napoleon openly referred to his future bride as a "walking womb" and so was naturally delighted when she gave birth to a healthy son**

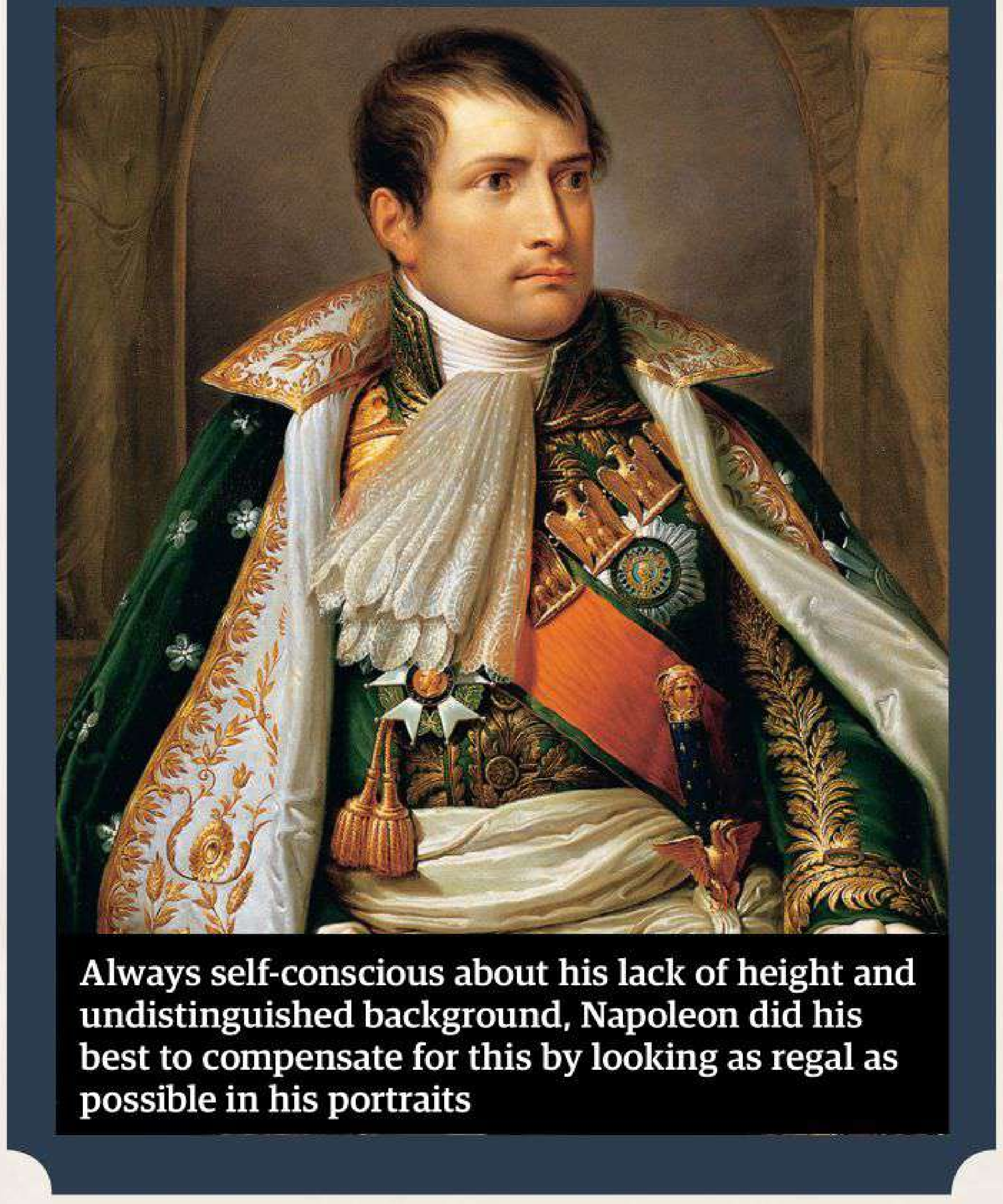
> "Napoleon was almost beside himself with impatience as he waited"

## Emperor Napoleon I

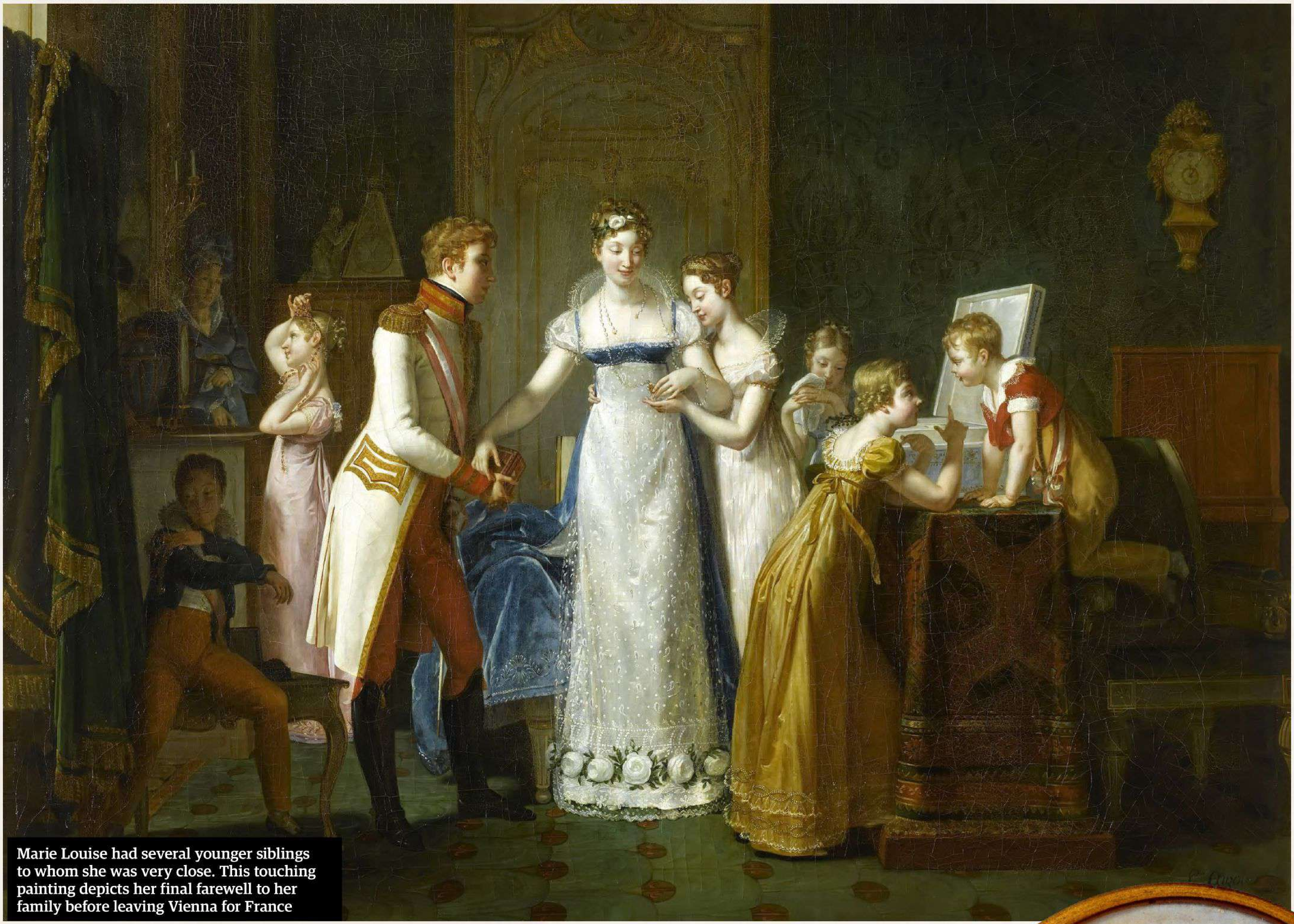
### Born into a comparatively modest family that often had financial difficulties, Napoleon's background was very different to that of his second wife

Born Napoleone di Buonaparte on 15 August 1769 in Ajaccio on the island of Corsica, which lies just off the coast of Italy, Napoleon's family were very minor Italian nobility – a sharp contrast to that of his second wife, Marie Louise, whose father was an emperor. Thanks to the generosity of his mother's family, Napoleon was sent to school in France at the age of nine before winning a scholarship to a military academy, where he was bullied for his Corsican accent, poor French and lack of height.

In 1784, Napoleon went on to prestigious École Militaire in Paris, where he trained to become an officer. The French Revolution of 1789 created many opportunities for ambitious, intelligent young men like Napoleon to prove themselves and he swiftly rose through the ranks of the army, while at the same time increasing his influence and power by involving himself in politics. His astonishing career came to an end with his defeat at Waterloo in 1815 and he would die six years later in May 1821 as a prisoner of the British on the South Atlantic island of Saint Helena, one of the most remote islands in the world.



**Always self-conscious about his lack of height and undistinguished background, Napoleon did his best to compensate for this by looking as regal as possible in his portraits**



Marie Louise had several younger siblings to whom she was very close. This touching painting depicts her final farewell to her family before leaving Vienna for France

© Getty Images

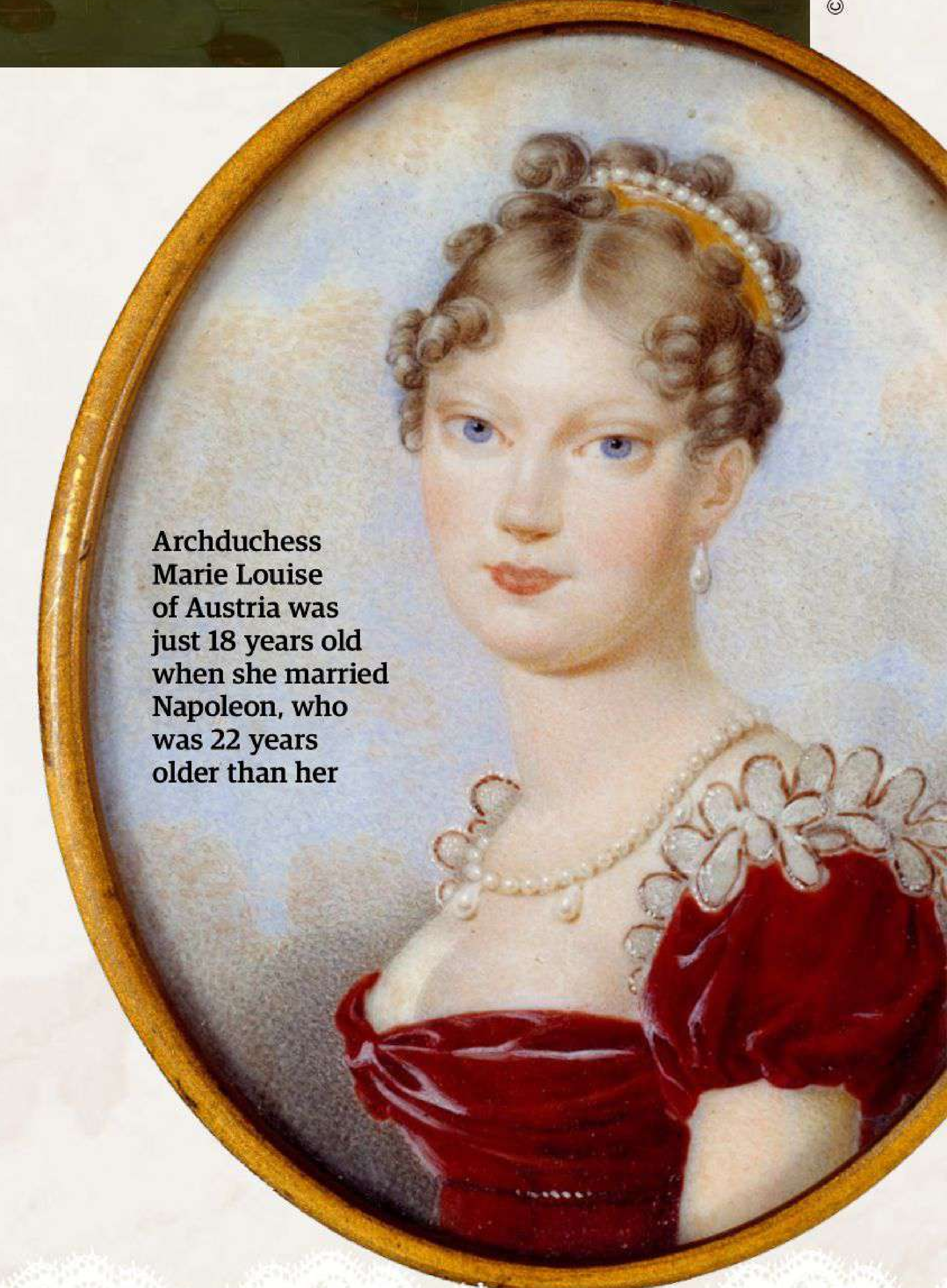
an Austrian archduchess as it made her own sacrifice worthwhile.

The following day, the imperial couple left Saint-Cloud at the head of an enormous procession of carriages and made their official entry of Paris, passing the still incomplete Arc de Triomphe and then making their way down the Champs Élysées to the Tuileries Palace, where the religious ceremony was to be held. The wedding took place in the Salon Carré in the adjoining Louvre, which had been stripped of the paintings on display and transformed into a magnificent temporary chapel by the architects Percier and Fomtaine.

The bridal couple and their entourage made their way through the grand gallery, which was lined with around 10,000 guests before entering the chapel. There, a further 400 guests were waiting to witness the ceremony, which was conducted by Napoleon's uncle Cardinal Fesch. Marie Louise looked radiant in the gold embroidered wedding gown that Napoleon had commissioned for her as well as her fabulous new diamond and emerald parure, while her groom looked equally stunning in white satin encrusted in gold bees, the Bonaparte symbol, and a red velvet jacket and cape topped with a huge black velvet hat decorated with white ostrich feathers and huge diamonds that had formerly belonged to Louis XVI.

Afterwards, while less favoured people outside on the streets of Paris revelled with copious amounts of free wine and food provided by Napoleon, the newlyweds and their entourage enjoyed a wedding banquet in the state rooms of the Tuileries Palace before departing by carriage for the Château de Neuilly on the outskirts of the capital, which belonged to the emperor's sister Pauline, Princess Borghese.

At the château, they enjoyed a lavish fête in their honour complete with a specially commissioned operetta, a miniature reproduction of Marie Louise's childhood home, the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, fireworks, living statues and thousands of fairy lights that twinkled everywhere in the gardens, turning them into a magical fairyland. Sadly, the celebratory ball held by the Austrian Ambassador a few months later was much less successful as it was prematurely ended by a terrible fire that killed several of the guests – luckily Napoleon and Marie Louise, who was already pregnant, managed to escape soon after the blaze began.



Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria was just 18 years old when she married Napoleon, who was 22 years older than her

# Princess Charlotte & Leopold I of the Belgians

*2 May 1816*

The wedding of Princess Charlotte, daughter of George IV, was celebrated by the the public as much as the guests. People gathered around the royal residences and celebrated throughout the whole day. The ceremony started at 9pm in the crimson drawing room at Carlton House. Officiated by the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, it lasted around 25 minutes.

©Getty

### 10 February 1840

# Queen Victoria & Prince Albert

A headstrong young queen and her conscientious cousin were brought together by family but married for love

Written by June Woolerton

Their romance remains one of the most famous in royal history but the marriage of Victoria and Albert almost didn't happen. The couple grew up knowing that many in their families wanted them to wed but, as the prospect of saying 'I do' drew closer, both expressed doubts and looked to futures without each other. However, one short meeting turned a family wish into passionate love and led to the deep devotion of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Their royal wedding, on 10 February 1840 at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, was a marriage their relatives had pushed for from the couple's earliest years, as soon as it became clear that Victoria was likely to become queen. Born on 24 May 1819, she was the only child of George III's fourth son, Edward, Duke of Kent, and his ambitious wife, Victoria. Baby Victoria lost both her father and her paternal grandfather before her first birthday and, as the reign of her uncle, George IV, progressed, it became increasingly clear that the young princess would one day inherit his throne. He had lost his only legitimate child in 1817 when Princess Charlotte of Wales had died in childbirth. By the time the young Victoria turned five, she was the hope of her dynasty.

Not that they showed it publicly. She lived in the rather rundown Kensington Palace with her mother while George IV refused to grant them an allowance. Instead, they relied on the generosity of her mother's brother, Leopold, who had personal reasons for nurturing his young niece. Leopold was the widower of Charlotte, the lost heir. He had made plans for his prospective role as Prince Consort during his brief marriage and now that his niece rather than his wife stood to take the throne, he developed a very firm idea of who could shoulder the dreams he had been forced to abandon. His older brother, Ernest, later Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, had welcomed a second son, Albert, on 26 August 1819. Leopold, with the backing of his mother, Augusta, began to talk of Victoria and Albert as the perfect match.

However, Leopold wasn't the only person with plans to marry off the extremely eligible princess.

A long list of royal suitors was suggested for Victoria, with one paper confidently reporting as early as 1828 that she would wed another cousin, Prince George of Cumberland. During her early years, the young Victoria was linked to royals including the duke of Orléans, as well as one of the princes of Orange. In 1830, George IV was succeeded by his younger brother, William IV, and the new king wanted his niece and heir to marry into the Dutch royal family, much to the fury of Leopold, who was now a monarch himself, having accepted the Belgian throne in 1831. When William brought his marriage candidate over to visit Victoria, Leopold wrote to his niece, describing the action as "very extraordinary". But he was no stranger to matchmaking visits himself…

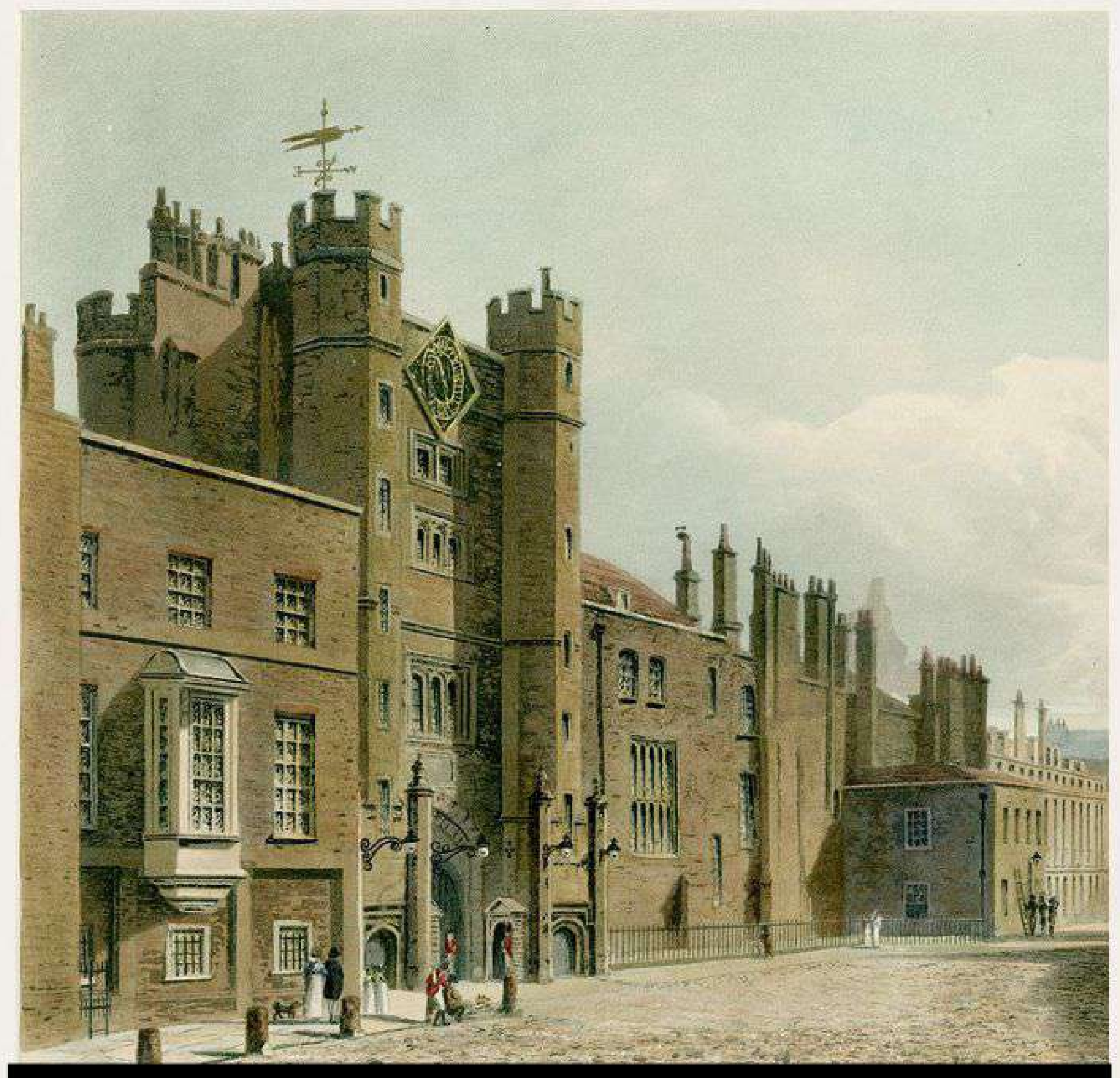
In 1836, Leopold arranged a trip to England for Prince Albert and his older brother, Ernest. The young Victoria, who had been raised by her mother in strict seclusion at Kensington Palace, was more than eager for company of her own age. She loved any opportunity to dance and so the balls and parties held for the young princes were a welcome

Victoria and Albert, young and very much in love, on their wedding day distraction for her. Albert, however, had been less enthusiastic. He hadn't enjoyed the long journey to England and he found the constant round of entertainments exhausting.

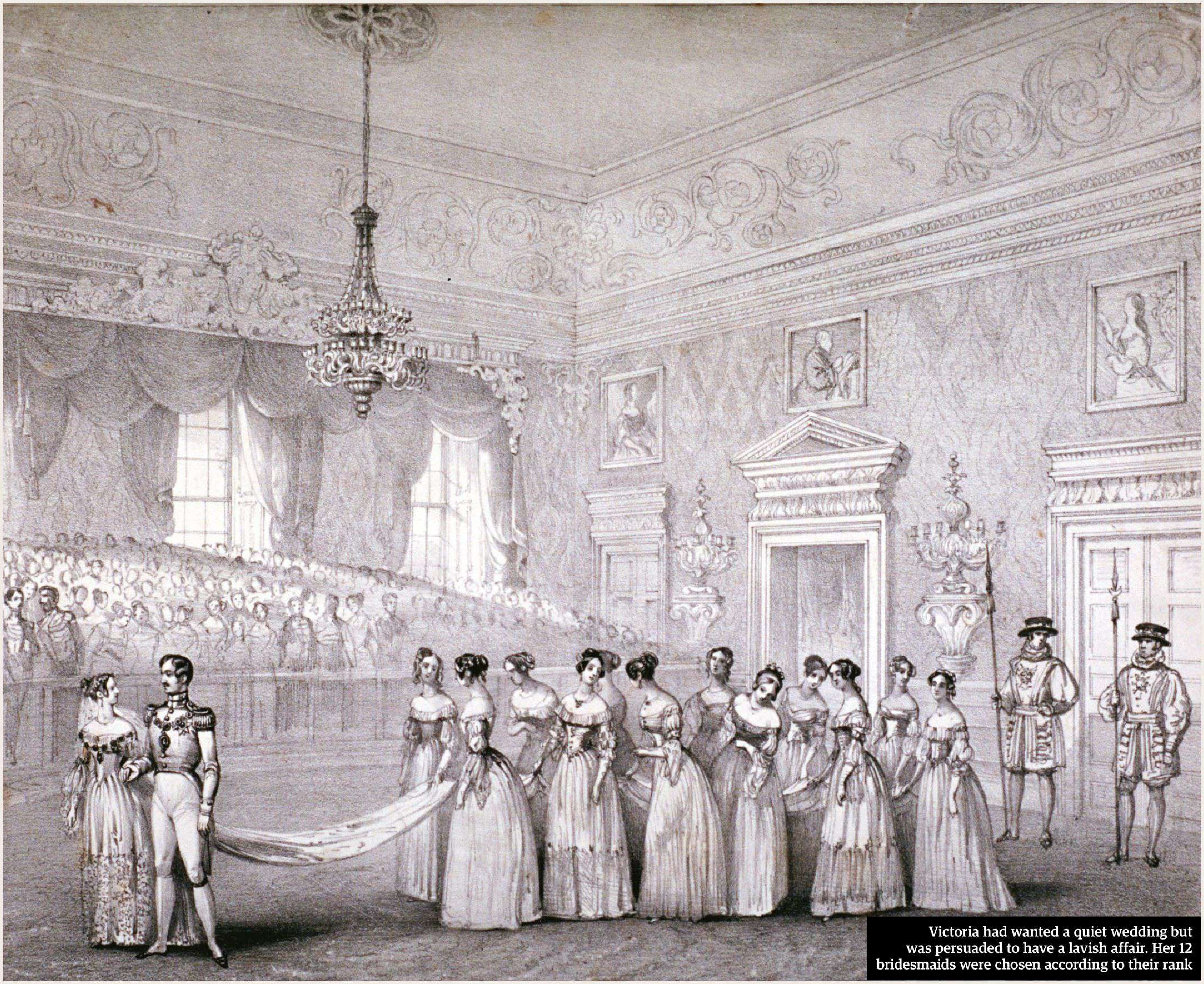
But both Victoria and Albert were aware that this was more than just a summer holiday. Leopold hoped this trip would mark the start of the cousins' trip to the altar. Victoria embraced the idea, writing to her uncle that her cousin "is very handsome", and adding "I thank you… for the prospect of great happiness you have contributed to give me in the person of dear Albert… he possesses every quality that could be desired to render me perfectly happy." The young prince, however, was less effusive with his only comment being "She is very amiable."

Albert was just as circumspect the following year when Victoria became queen on the death of William IV. He sent his cousin a brief note of congratulations but contact between the two began to falter and Albert started to express concerns that the young queen was "incredibly stubborn" and prone to "extreme obstinacy". Victoria, meanwhile, was relishing her new role and the freedom it brought, most notably from her controlling mother. King Leopold now consulted her as an equal, writing to her about the best way to educate Albert as a potential consort. However, doubts were beginning to creep into Victoria's mind about the marriage, while visits from other German cousins and Grand Duke Alexander of Russia had left her giddy with excitement. Her beloved Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, was also less than keen on the match with Albert and, by early 1839, Victoria was speaking with determination about putting any marriage plans on hold, for several years at least.

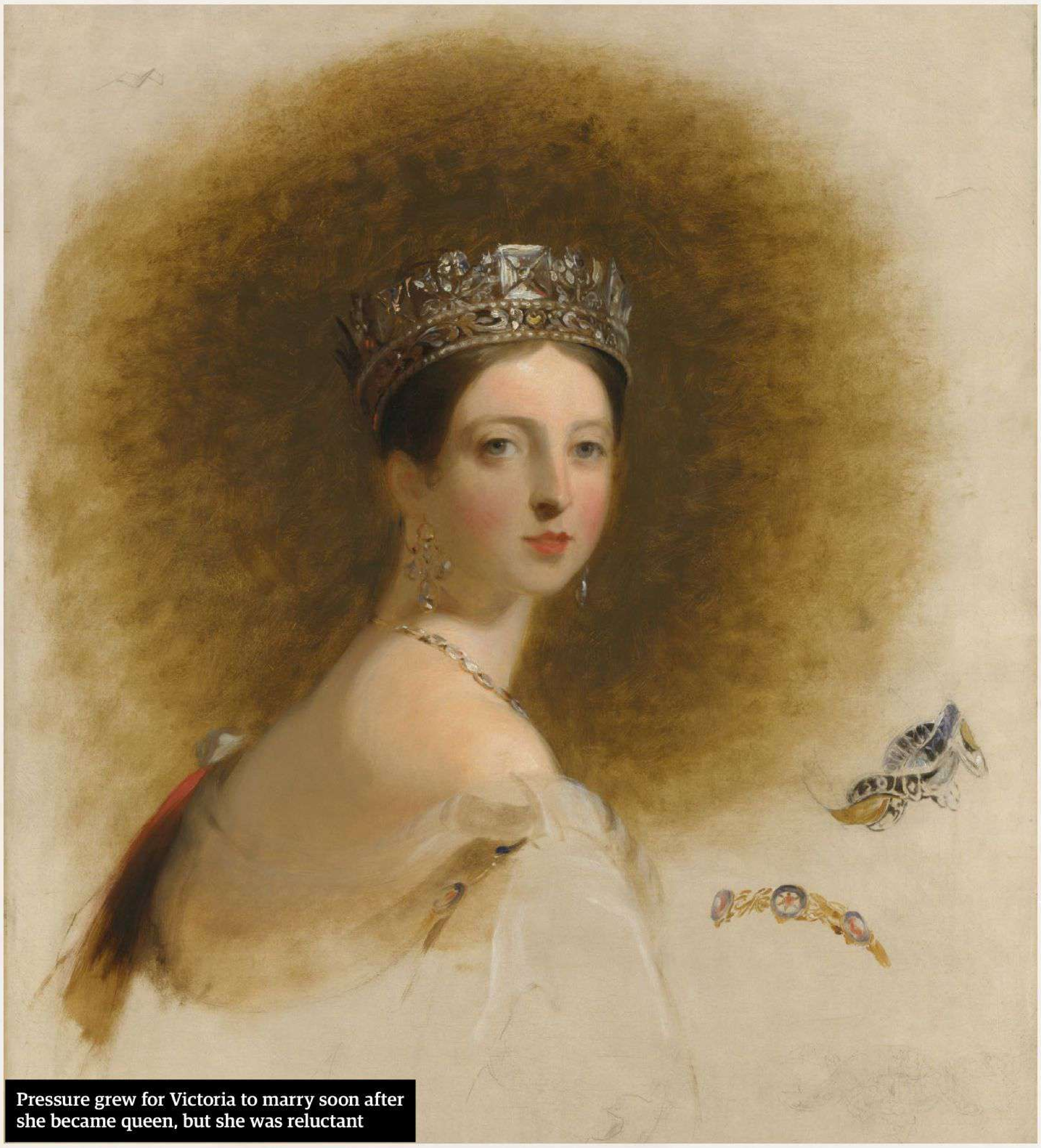
Leopold wasn't deterred. He had arranged another visit to England for Albert but, ahead of the trip, Victoria wrote to him that while she



The couple's wedding venue, St. James's Palace, London, painted in 1819, the year both were born



Victoria had wanted a quiet wedding but was persuaded to have a lavish affair. Her 12 bridesmaids were chosen according to their rank



Pressure grew for Victoria to marry soon after she became queen, but she was reluctant

liked the prince as a "friend, and as a cousin, and a brother" she wasn't sure she felt enough for him to be happy in a marriage. Just to make her position clear, she told her uncle that she had never promised to wed Albert. Her cousin, who had spent his teenage years being prepared for life as a consort, laid down his own ultimatum. If Victoria didn't make her mind up during his visit, he would withdraw from the race to be her husband. He needn't have worried. Within weeks, he was engaged to the Queen of England.

Victoria had welcomed her cousin with a distinct lack of good grace, writing sulkily to Leopold when Albert was delayed. However, she was ready to meet him when he rode up to Windsor Castle on the evening of 10 October 1839 and the attraction was instant. Albert was pale from seasickness and had no clean clothes to change into as his luggage had been delayed but Victoria didn't care. From the moment she saw him again, she fell in love, writing over the following days that he was "beautiful" and "excessively handsome" while his conversation was "fascinating" and his character "amiable and unaffected".

Victoria and Albert spent hours together every day, riding, walking and talking together and learning about each other's interests. The prince danced endlessly with his cousin and played the piano for her while she sat and listened to his thoughts on art. Just days later, Victoria told Lord Melbourne that she had all but made her mind up to marry Albert but wasn't sure how long to wait. Her Prime Minister advised a speedy engagement, which brought a new anxiety for Victoria, for, as a queen, it was she who would have to propose.

On 15 October 1839, Queen Victoria requested the presence of her cousin in her Blue Closet. Albert arrived, in a state of nerves, to find Victoria trembling with anxiety. They chatted for a few moments before, as Victoria wrote in her diary, she told him "it would make me too happy if he would consent to what I wished". Albert agreed instantly with Victoria noting "it was the happiest, brightest moment in my life". Now betrothed to one another, the couple spent even more time in each other's company as Albert's visit continued, with Victoria recording in her diary that "we kissed each other again and again".

## The queen of wedding cakes

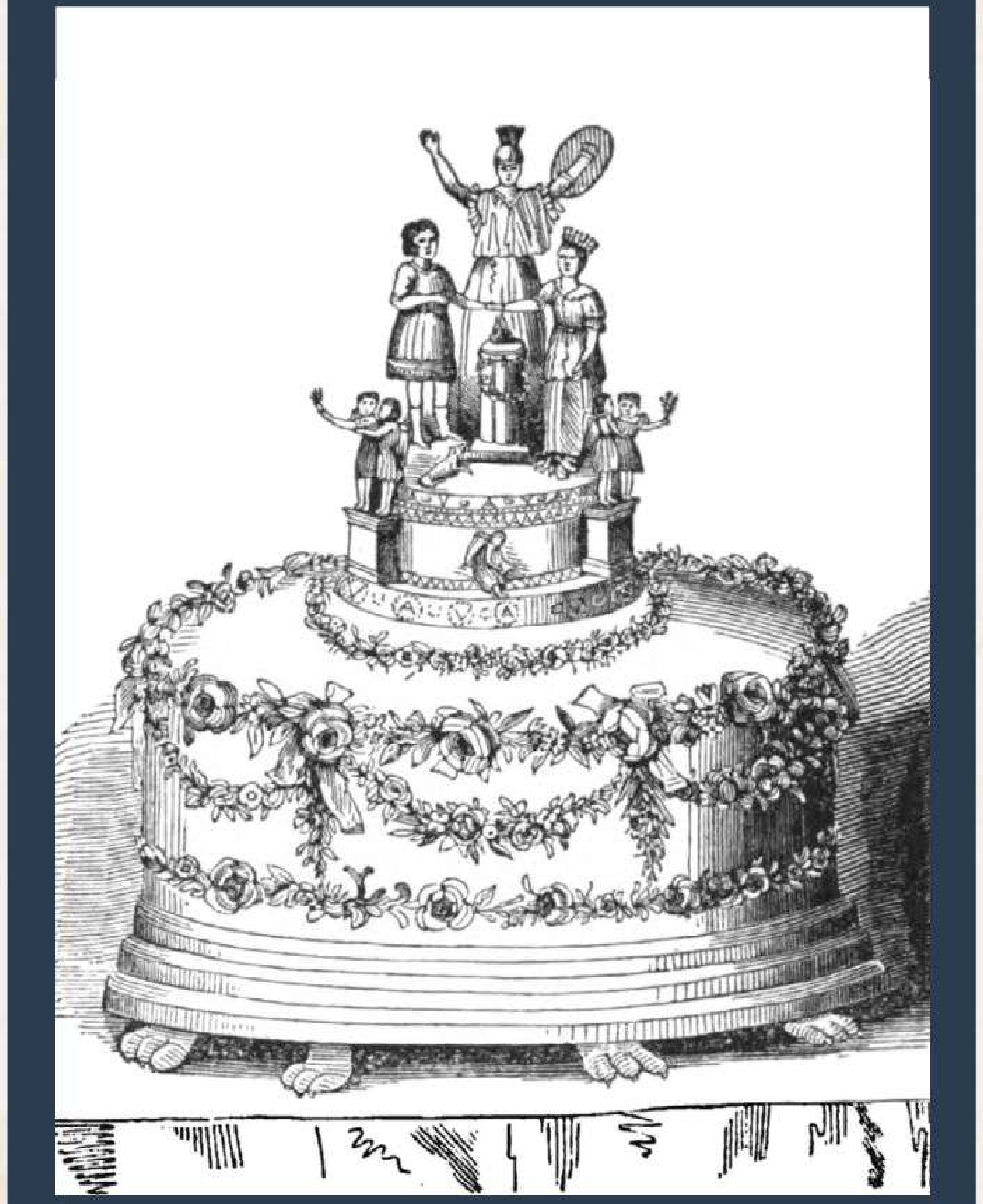
### The huge wedding confection baked to celebrate the royal marriage was as much a talking point as the bride's dress

While the bride and groom took starring roles at the royal wedding of 1840, they had competition. Their wedding cake, a spectacular bake that needed four men to carry it, became a national obsession.

The huge circular confection was ten feet in circumference, more than a foot deep and weighed more than 300 pounds. It also showed the modern touches Victoria and Albert were bringing to the monarchy – while the couple opted for a traditional fruit cake, they chose striking decorations filled with symbolism.

The cake was topped with models of Victoria and Albert in Roman dress, with a figure of Britannia standing between them. A dog, representing fidelity, sat at the groom's feet, while doves, symbolising a happy marriage, nestled near the bride. The cake was festooned with cupids holding emblems of the United Kingdom and decked with orange blossom and myrtle, the floral symbols of love and marriage.

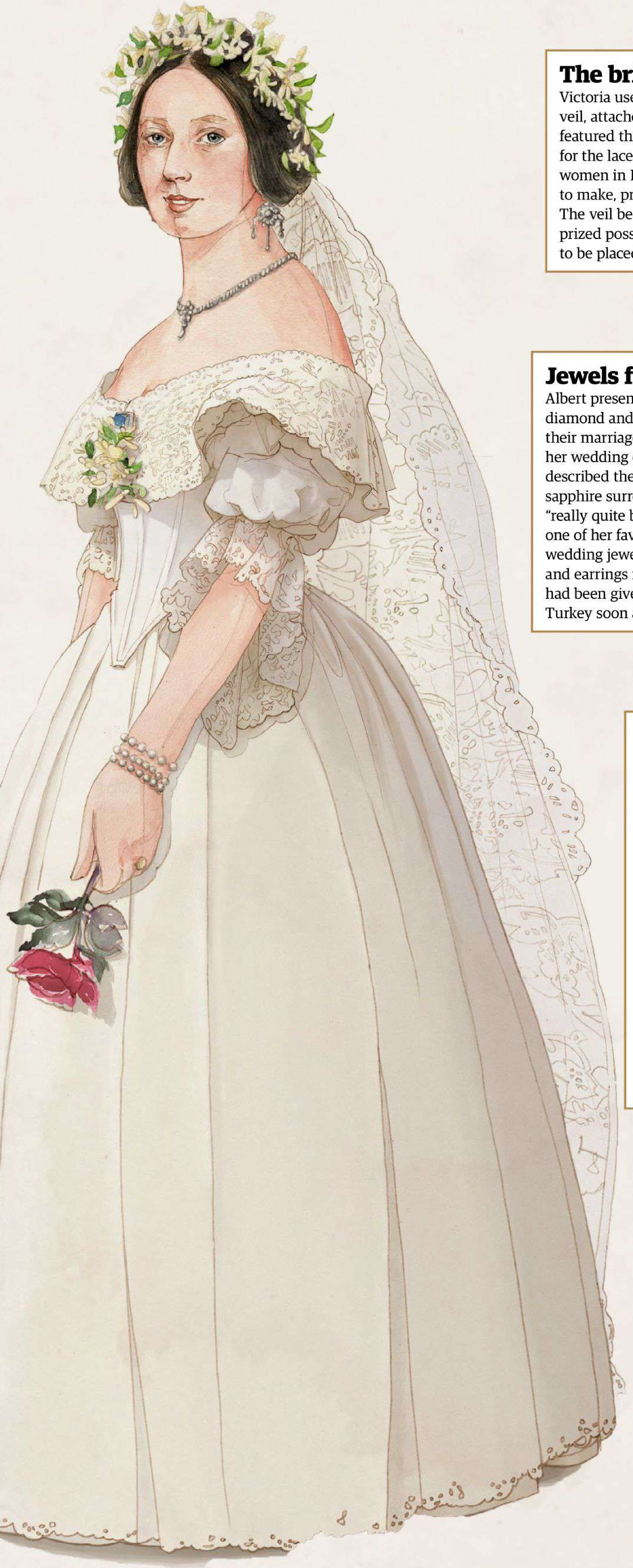
The cake was almost as popular as the couple themselves. Lithographs of the bake were made while newspapers reported every detail of the confection, which was created by the cooks at Buckingham Palace. Despite the cake's enormous size, it couldn't feed all the guests, so Victoria and Albert had multiple cakes made so they could offer slices to as many people as possible.



The cake was reported to contain "the most exquisite compounds of all the rich things" while its decorations caused a stir of their own

# The dress that started an enduring trend

Victoria put a lot of thought into her choices, from her lace to her flowers



### Honiton lace and Spitalfields silk

Queen Victoria wanted her dress to boost some of the cottage industries that were suffering an economic downturn. She chose silk satin woven in Spitalfields and lace from Devon. The Honiton lace was made to a special design that was destroyed afterwards so no one could copy it. Victoria's gown had a long flounce of lace across the bodice as well as smaller trimmings at the end of the half-length sleeves. The lace provided work for dozens of local women.

### The bride wore white

Victoria caused a storm by choosing to marry in a creamy white gown, as coloured dresses with gold or silver embroidery were more popular at the time. The young queen, a keen follower of fashion, chose this partly to show off the lace, which was so important to her bridal look. The trend for white wedding gowns soon took off among the upper and middle classes, who wanted to show their own prestige by copying the queen, and the trend of white and cream dresses has endured to this day.

### A daring design

Victoria's wedding dress was simpler and more daring than previous royal bridal gowns. Despite the chilly weather, the queen chose a low décolletage with bared shoulders. Victoria also emphasised her figure with a pointed waist on the bodice of her gown. William Dyce, head of the Government School of Design, helped create the pattern for the lace while the dress was created by Mary Bettans.

### Shoes, by royal appointment

Victoria chose flat shoes for her wedding, produced by Gundry and Sons who supplied footwear for several members of the royal family from their famous shop in Soho. Made of white satin, the shoes featured a square toe and bands of ribbon crossing the foot in horizontal stripes. They were secured with more long ribbons that tied around Victoria's ankles.

### The bride's beloved veil

Victoria used Devon lace for her wedding veil, attached to her hair with flowers. It featured the same, special design used for the lace on her dress. It took local women in Honiton and Beer six weeks to make, providing much-needed work. The veil became one of Victoria's most prized possessions and she asked for it to be placed over her face for her burial.

### Jewels fit for a queen

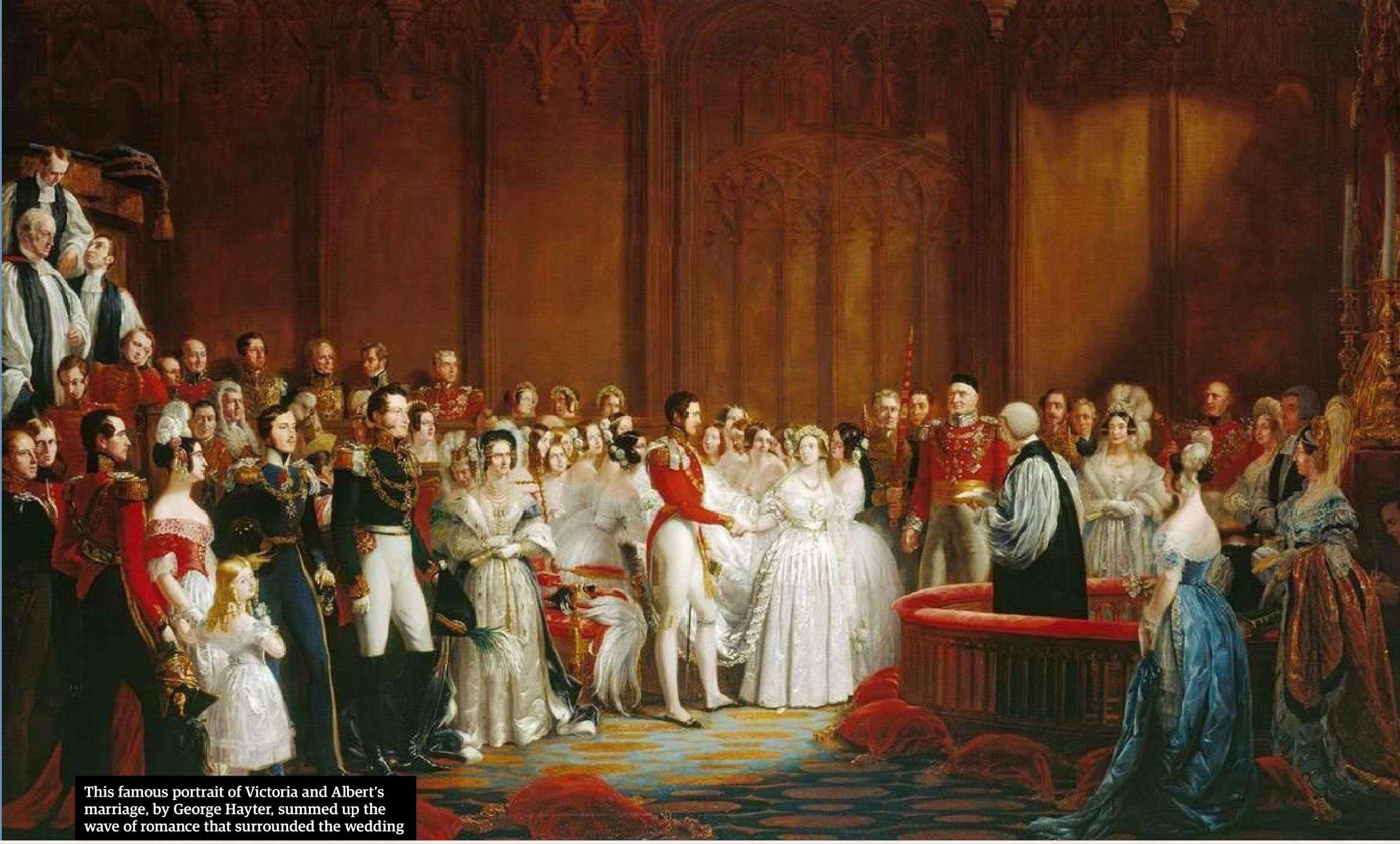
Albert presented his bride with a sapphire, diamond and gold brooch on the eve of their marriage and Victoria added it to her wedding outfit. The young queen described the gem, which featured a huge sapphire surrounded by 12 diamonds, as "really quite beautiful". It would become one of her favourite pieces. Victoria's wedding jewellery also included a necklace and earrings made from diamonds that had been given to her by the Sultan of Turkey soon after she became queen.

### Bridal blooms

Victoria shunned a crown for her wedding day, instead holding her veil in place with a wreath of orange blossom. The flower, which also trimmed her dress and train, signifies innocence and eternal love as well as being an ancient symbol of marriage and fertility. Myrtle, another traditional sign of love and marriage, also featured in the bridal blooms. For her wedding posy, Victoria chose a simple arrangement of her groom's favourite flowers, snowdrops.

### A troublesome train

Victoria's bridal train was 18 feet long and was carried by her 12 bridesmaids. However, it was too short for them all to be able to hold it and walk comfortably. Instead, the girls ended up standing almost on top of one another and had to tiptoe down the aisle to stay upright.



**This famous portrait of Victoria and Albert's marriage, by George Hayter, summed up the wave of romance that surrounded the wedding**

However, their private pleasure was also a public matter and soon the formalities of a royal wedding began. By the time Albert returned home in November 1839, his engagement was the talk of the town, while, within days of his departure, his future wife had made her Declaration of Marriage to the Privy Council. The meeting, at Buckingham Palace on 23 November 1839, had so filled Victoria with dread that her hands were shaking and she almost dropped the paper she was holding, but she made her announcement in a confident and clear voice.

It wasn't all plain sailing, however. The queen's choice wasn't universally popular, with some critics claiming Albert was marrying for money while others said the queen needed an older and wiser husband. Public opinion mattered to the queen, who had already faced attacks over some of her early decisions, and it was Victoria herself who argued against Albert being given a peerage in case it caused dissent.

There was also a fierce debate over whether Albert should take precedence over Victoria's remaining uncles and on the make-up of his new household, while parliament ended up awarding the prince an allowance of £30,000 a year, much lower than the expected £50,000. Albert, always inclined to introspection, accepted the decision calmly but also expressed concerns about his new role, writing that his future would "not always be unclouded".

However, he was all smiles when he arrived at Buckingham Palace on 8 February 1840 ahead of his wedding. The young couple threw themselves into the final preparations for their big day, spending the evening before going through the marriage ceremony and even practising trying on the wedding ring.

Victoria was determined to see her groom on the morning of their wedding, sending him a sweet note signed "thy ever faithful Victoria R" before one final audience with him ahead of their marriage. Albert was the first to arrive at St. James's Palace for the ceremony, which was set for 1pm. He was dressed in the uniform of a British Field Marshal and wore the star and riband of the Order of the Garter. The bride left Buckingham Palace soon afterwards, accompanied by her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and her Mistress of the Robes, the Duchess of Sutherland, and seemed overcome by the crowds that cheered her.

Queen Victoria made the final preparations for her marriage in the Throne Room of St James's Palace, where her 12 bridesmaids, all daughters of peers, arranged her gown and train. The attendants, including Lady Mary Howard and Lady Frances Cowper, were dressed in white just like the bride. The groom entered the chapel first, to Handel's *See, The Conquering Hero Comes*, before the queen's procession arrived with Victoria surrounded by attendants, including Lord Melbourne who was holding the Sword of State. Her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, was at her side to give her away.

More than 300 guests watched Victoria and Albert exchange vows, with the young queen promising to obey her husband. Among the congregation was King Leopold of the Belgians as well as many members of the royal family, including Queen Adelaide, the widow of King William IV. Victoria described the ceremony as "very imposing, and fine and simple" and was almost overcome as she received her wedding ring. Once husband and wife, the couple led the procession back through St. James's Palace before riding through more crowds to Buckingham Palace, where their wedding breakfast was held.

It was a short celebration as, by 4pm, the couple were ready to leave for their honeymoon at Windsor Castle. Victoria was once more overcome by the crowds that turned out to see the newlyweds, who were cheered all the way from London to Berkshire. Writing in her diary the day after her marriage, Victoria confided that "we did not sleep much" before once more heaping praises on the man she called "my precious Angel".

But while deeply in love with Albert, even in the first heady moments of their marriage, Victoria never forgot she was a queen as well as a wife. While the prince had wanted a six-week holiday away from England, Victoria had insisted that three days at Windsor would be enough before she headed back to London for her duties as sovereign. They returned to build a new court, which would slowly see Albert assume more influence and the young cousins turn into a 19th-century power couple.

At the heart of Victoria and Albert's success lay their unchanging devotion to one another. They were happily married for more than 20 years and had nine children, among them a son called Leopold in honour of the uncle who had brought them together. The plans for a regal marriage put together so carefully in the 1820s had gone on to produce one of the most celebrated royal love stories of all time.

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## Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, & Princess Louise of Prussia

*13 March 1879*

Queen Victoria wasn't best pleased with her favourite son's choice of bride, but that didn't stop Prince Arthur. He and Princess Louise married at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. As per tradition, Louise was escorted to the altar where her husband, his two older brothers and Queen Victoria stood waiting by her father, Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia.

### 26 November 1894

# Tsar Nicholas II & Princess Alix

Proving that love at first sight exists, Nicholas and Alix overcame the opposition of their families to finally wed

**Written by Jessica Leggett**

Russian Tsarevich Nicholas and Princess Alix of Hesse and by Rhine first met in 1884 at the wedding of Nicholas's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, and Princess Elisabeth, Alix's sister. The pair were first cousins and close in age, with Nicholas being 16 years old and Alix just four years younger. Despite their brief meeting and her youth, the tsarevich was immediately captivated by the princess. They were reunited five years later when Alix travelled to St. Petersburg to visit her sister, and soon enough the young couple fell deeply in love.

Alix stayed in Russia for a month and a half. In January 1890, a glittering formal ball was held at the Winter Palace. Choosing to wear a dress with white diamonds, flowers and a sash, Alix shared a dance with Nicholas, her handsome suitor. Enamoured with each other, the princess and the tsarevich kept in contact following her departure by exchanging letters, and in his diary Nicholas admitted that his love for Alix had developed "more deeply and strongly" since her visit to Russia.

However, he was not the only one to have set his sights on Alix. That same year, their mutual cousin Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, proposed to Alix. This match was greatly supported by Alix's grandmother, Queen Victoria, as the Duke was also her grandson and second in line to the British throne. If they married, it would mean that Alix would become the future queen of Britain, a prospect that delighted Victoria.

Unfortunately for Victoria, her hopes were dashed when Alix rejected the Duke's proposal, having already given her heart to Nicholas. Nonetheless, the path for the tsarevich and the princess to be together had not yet been cleared, as they faced opposition from Nicholas's parents, Tsar Alexander III and Tsarina Maria Feodorovna.

Despite the fact that Alix was their goddaughter and they were fond of her, both Alexander and Maria were staunchly anti-German. As a consequence, they were unwilling to give their consent to the match, particularly as Hesse was largely deemed to be an insignificant German state. Therefore, a marriage with Alix brought little to no advantages for Russia and on this basis she was not considered to be a suitable catch for the heir to the Russian throne.

Hoping to dissuade Nicholas from his quest to marry Alix, Alexander attempted to arrange other matches, particularly with Princess Hélène, daughter to the pretender to the French throne. However, Nicholas refused to consider the match and Hélène refused in turn, knowing that she would have to convert from Roman Catholicism to Russian Orthodoxy to marry him.

Religion proved to be an issue for another potential bride, Princess Margaret of Prussia, another granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Like Hélène, Margaret refused to convert to Russian Orthodoxy – she wished to remain a Protestant. While the question of his marriage was a priority amongst his family, Nicholas would not be swayed – although he did engage in a three-year affair

The wedding of Nicholas and Alexandra, depicted by Laurits Tuxen

Tsarevich Nicholas, pictured here in 1892, was immediately captivated by Princess Alix

> *"Having been in love with Alix for a decade, Nicholas proposed"*

with Mathilde Kschessinska, a beautiful Russian ballerina from a Polish family.

Regardless of this affair, Nicholas remained resolute in his determination to marry Alix. Equally stubborn, his parents still resisted the prospect of Alix as a daughter-in-law, until Tsar Alexander's health began to worsen. Faced with his own mortality, Alexander realised that his son needed to marry as soon as possible and reluctantly accepted Nicholas's choice of bride. Armed with his father's permission, the tsarevich wanted to propose to his beloved as soon as possible.

In April 1894, Alix's brother, Ernest Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse, married Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a niece of Tsar Alexander and Nicholas's cousin. The wedding took place in Coburg, Germany, bringing together around 100 members of the European royal families, including Nicholas and Alix. After a long and persistent campaign, the tsarevich had his chance.

Without wasting any time, Nicholas proposed to Alix the day after he had arrived in Coburg. Having been in love with her for a decade and knowing that she shared his feelings, the tsarevich thought the princess would immediately say yes – but he was wrong. As it turned out, religion was also a problem for Alix. A committed Lutheran, she did not want to abandon her faith to convert to Russian Orthodoxy.

Alix tearfully rejected Nicholas's proposal and entreated him to let her go. This was not the outcome that anybody expected, as their relatives braced themselves for an announcement of the engagement at any moment. They were taken aback once they heard that Alix had turned Nicholas down, but one guest, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, took it upon himself to intervene.

Wilhelm approached Alix and told her that it was her duty to marry Nicholas for the peace and security of Europe. He reminded her that, after all, her sister Elisabeth (or rather, Grand Duchess Elizabeth, as she was now known) had converted herself when she had married ten years earlier. In fact, Elizabeth decided to talk to Alix herself, assuring her little sister that it was not difficult to convert because there were so many similarities between the two religions.

Meanwhile, Wilhelm found Nicholas and encouraged him to propose Alix again, advising the tsarevich that he should appear masculine and bring the princess flowers as a romantic gesture. The Kaiser's hard work was not a selfless act, as he hoped that the marriage would further his quest for German hegemony. Nevertheless, his efforts worked because when Nicholas proposed to Alix a second time, she gladly accepted.

For the remainder of their time in Coburg, the newly engaged couple were inseparable. They informed all of their relatives of the happy news, which eventually overshadowed the wedding celebrations for which they had all gathered.

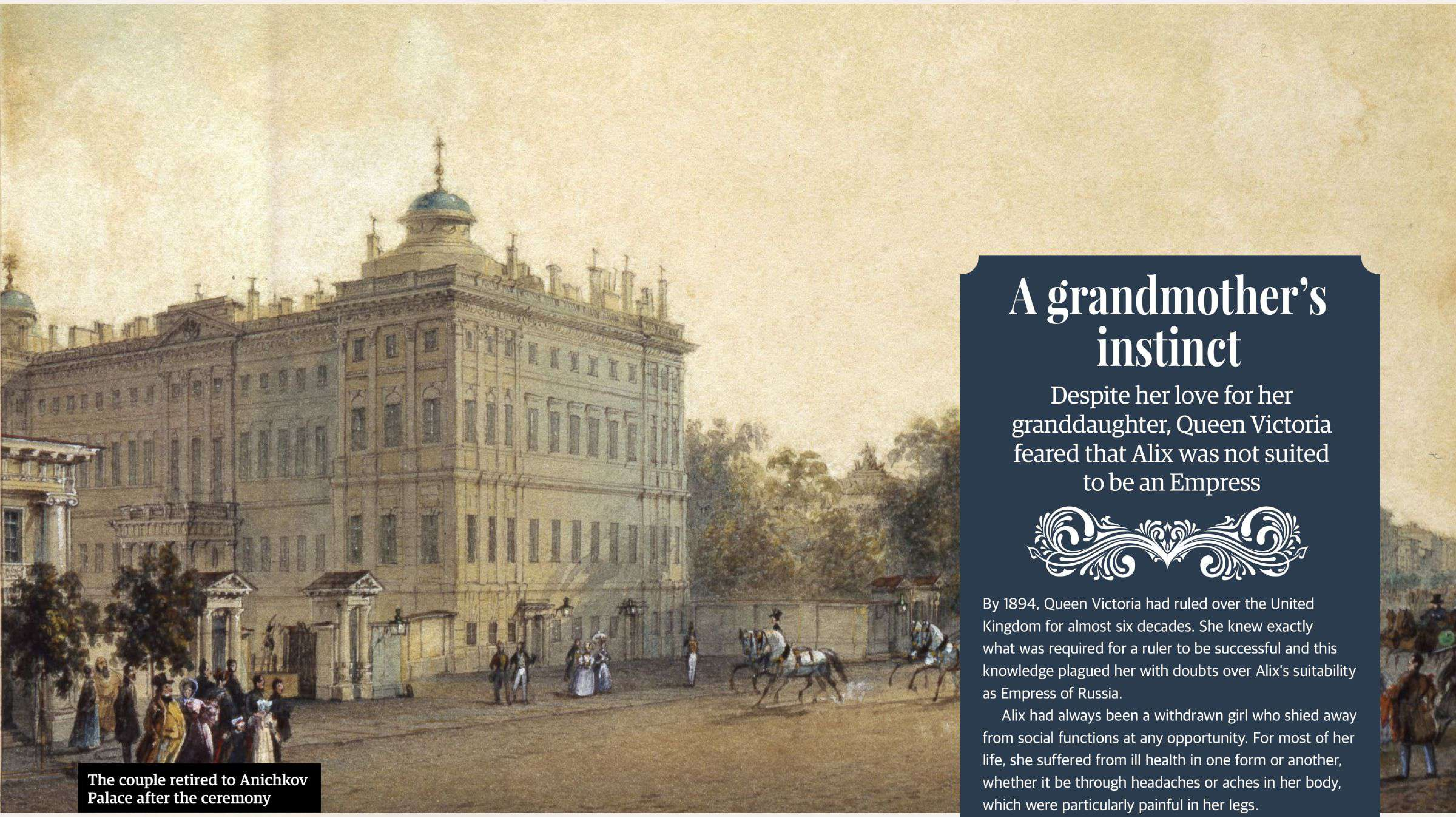
Deciding to embrace the engagement, Nicholas's parents even arranged a gift for Alix, a pearl sautoir made by the famed Russian jeweller Fabergé in St. Petersburg. With every pearl handpicked by the Tsar himself, it was the most expensive item Fabergé ever sold at a cost of 250,000 roubles, or roughly £23 million today.

Nicholas himself spared no expensive, gifting his new fiancée a pink pearl engagement ring, which she wore on her right hand (in keeping with Russian Orthodoxy) for the rest of her life. In the following months, the tsarevich would also give Alix a Siberian aquamarine and diamond brooch, which she treasured, and a pearl and diamond necklace that he had purchased from Fabergé.

While many of their relatives were delighted, particularly Elizabeth and Sergei, who had supported the couple from the beginning, Queen Victoria was dismayed at the news. Alix was reportedly her favourite granddaughter and Victoria was not pleased to learn that she would be marrying a Russian.

Her main concern was Alix's safety in Russia, a country that Victoria disliked and had experienced many political issues with in the past, particularly during the Crimean War. The assassinations of Nicholas's grandfather, Tsar Alexander II, in 1881 and the recent assassination of French President Marie François Sadi Carnot in June 1894 served as stark reminders to the queen of the dangers of political instability, with Victoria concerned that her granddaughter would one day be in the crossfire.

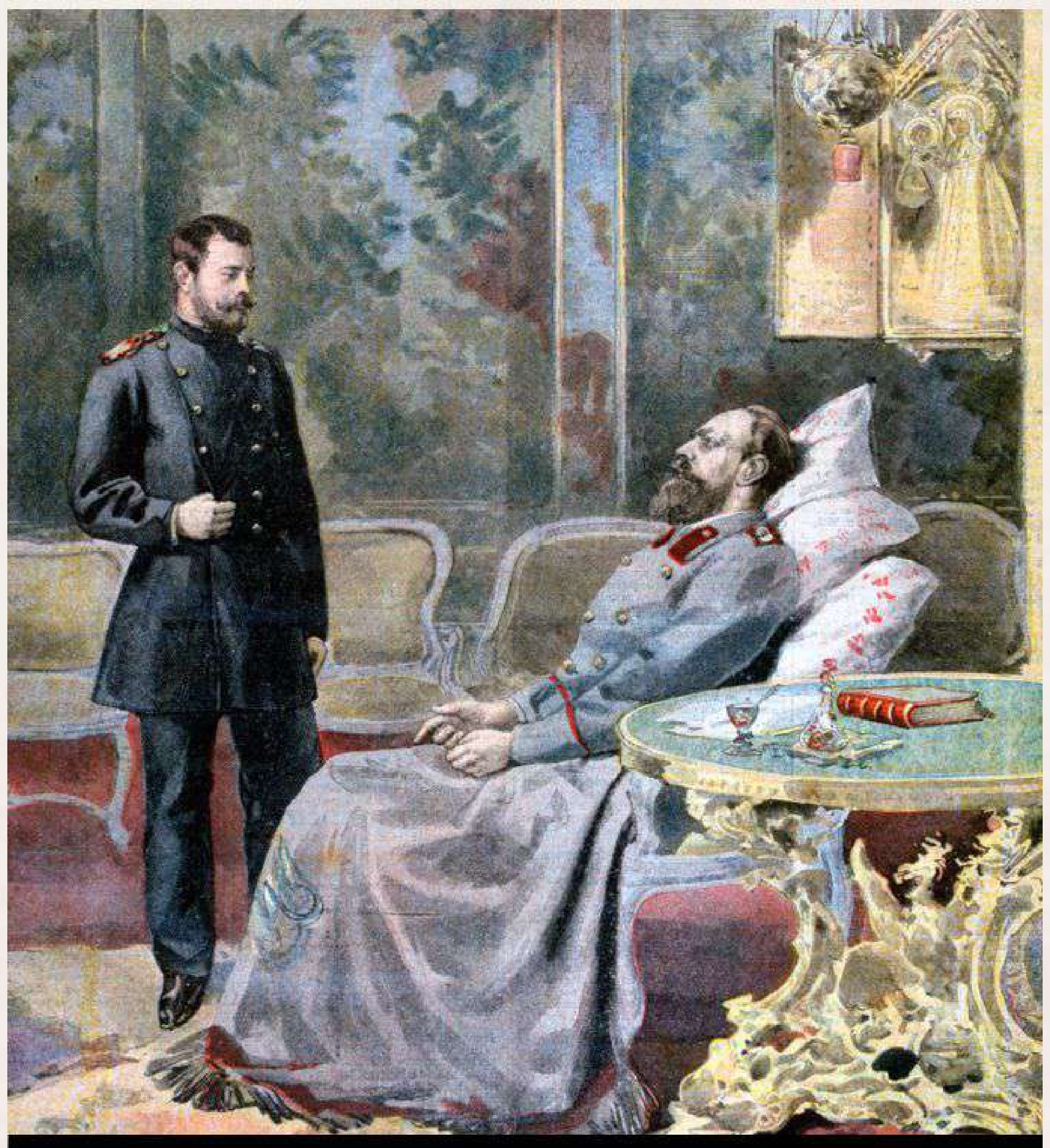
Hoping to delay the wedding for as long as possible, Victoria invited Alix to England so that she could take time to reflect on her recent engagement. Alix visited Harrogate to undergo a treatment for sciatica, and while there she began to study Russian. "It is amusing, but certainly not easy!" the princess wrote of her lessons. Soon



The couple retired to Anichkov Palace after the ceremony

afterwards, Nicholas arrived with his father's priest, who had been instructed to teach Alix about Russian Orthodoxy.

During their stay in England the future king, Edward VIII, was born so the couple were able to attend his christening. Nicholas stayed in England for a month before returning home, with Victoria lamenting, "The more I think of sweet Alicky's marriage, the more unhappy I am." This turned out to be an ominous reflection, because although the couple were happy, it was not long before they were faced with tragedy.



Tsar Alexander III's premature death suddenly thrust the young couple into the spotlight

Losing weight rapidly and fainting frequently, Tsar Alexander's health was quickly deteriorating. Realising how bad his father's condition was, Nicholas received the Tsar's permission to summon Alix to court, and she travelled to Russia accompanied by Elizabeth. Upon Alix's arrival, Alexander insisted on wearing full court dress to receive her, so that he could formally give her his blessing.

On 1 November 1894, Alexander passed away and that very same evening Nicholas was declared the new Tsar of Russia. The following day, Alix was received into the Russian Orthodox Church as Grand Duchess Alexandra Feodorovna, although she was not required to repudiate her former faith. The princess hoped to adopt the name Catherine but, following Nicholas's wishes, she chose the name Alexandra.

The court entered into mourning following the Tsar's death and Alexander's funeral was held on 19 November. Nicholas and Alix's wedding had originally been scheduled for the following spring, but the new Tsar had no desire to wait now that he had ascended the imperial throne.

Wanting to marry as quickly as possible, Nicholas suggested that he marry Alix at Livadia

## A grandmother's instinct

### Despite her love for her granddaughter, Queen Victoria feared that Alix was not suited to be an Empress

By 1894, Queen Victoria had ruled over the United Kingdom for almost six decades. She knew exactly what was required for a ruler to be successful and this knowledge plagued her with doubts over Alix's suitability as Empress of Russia.

Alix had always been a withdrawn girl who shied away from social functions at any opportunity. For most of her life, she suffered from ill health in one form or another, whether it be through headaches or aches in her body, which were particularly painful in her legs.

On top of this, Alix lacked the political experience to navigate the role of an Empress, a situation that was worsened by the fact that Nicholas's father had failed to prepare him for the imperial throne. Queen Victoria hoped that Alix's resolve to remain a Lutheran would prevent her engagement, but this was in vain.

When Alix agreed to marry Nicholas, Victoria was left with no choice but to accept their engagement. However, in a letter she wrote to Alix's sister, Princess Victoria, the queen stated, "My blood runs cold when I think of her so young and most likely placed on that very unstable throne." Victoria died in 1901 and she never lived to see her tragic premonition come true 16 years later.

Queen Victoria pictured at Balmoral with the Prince of Wales, Nicholas, Alexandra and their eldest child, Olga, in 1896

> *"After their wedding, Nicholas wrote 'My bliss is without bounds'"*

Palace before his father's funeral. His mother agreed but Nicholas's uncles stepped in, arguing that a Tsar's wedding should be held in St. Petersburg with at least some fanfare, in line with the people's expectations.

While royal weddings were usually extravagant affairs, court protocol prevented this during the mourning period. Nicholas refused to wait for the end of court mourning and so it was decided that the wedding would be held on 26 November, the birthday of his mother, Dowager Empress Maria, when protocol would not be quite as stringent.

The marriage took place in the Grand Church of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Nicholas, wearing his Hussar uniform, travelled to the Palace from Anichkov Palace at 11:30am in an open landau, accompanied by his brother, Grand Duke Michael. Meanwhile his mother journeyed to Sergeivsky Palace to collect Alexandra for the ceremony.

Thousands of people lined the streets hoping to get a glimpse of the royal couple. It was traditional for the bride to be dressed in the Malachite Room in the Winter Palace, and so Alexandra prepared for the wedding with the help of Maria.

## The wedding dress

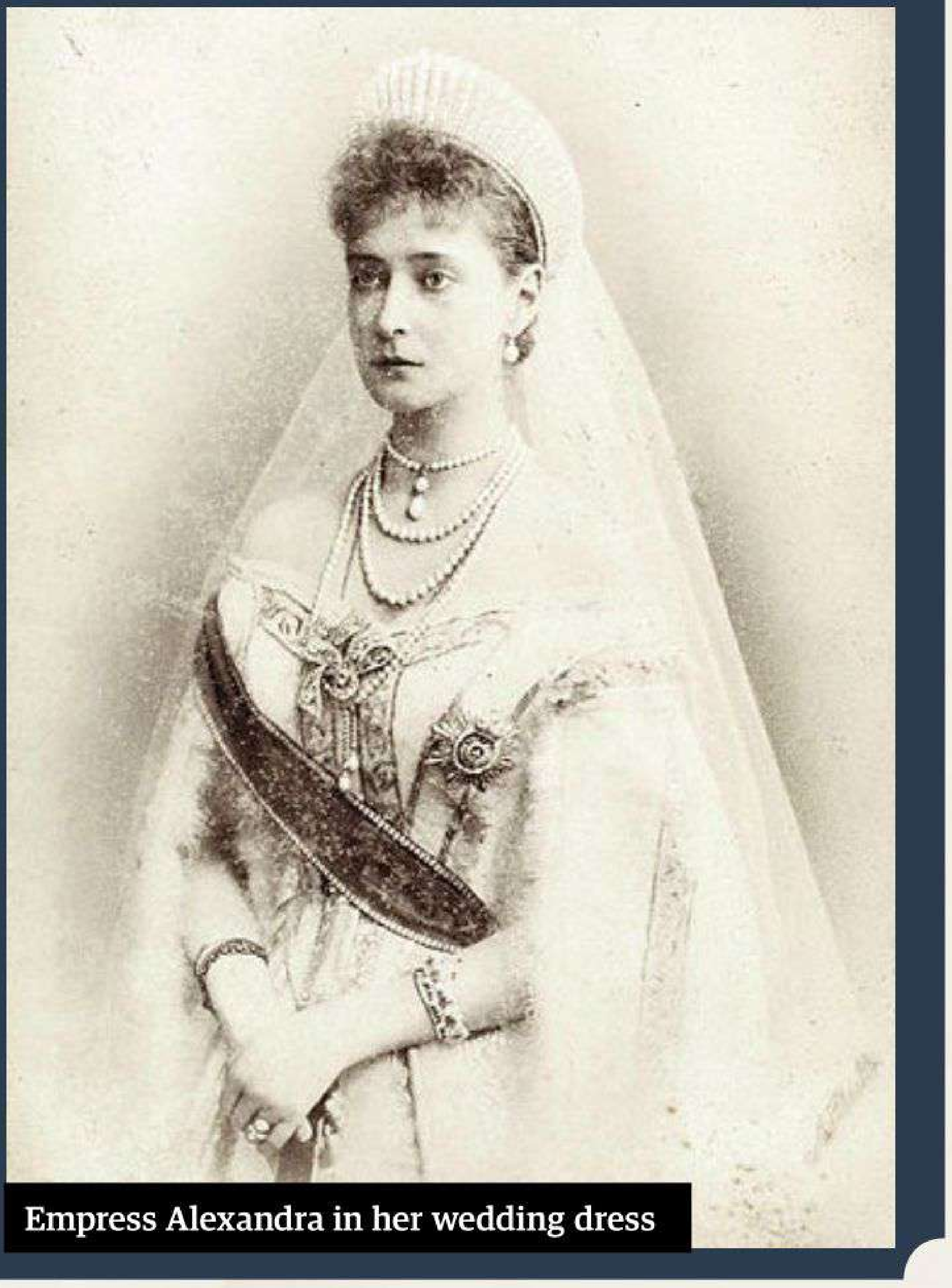
### Alexandra's outfit was certainly fit for an Empress

Although the day was hastily arranged in less than a month, Nicholas and Alexandra's wedding was still a glamorous affair and the dress was no exception. In fact, it was said to have been so heavy and elaborate, it took Alexandra an hour to dress and she required help to kneel and stand during the ceremony.

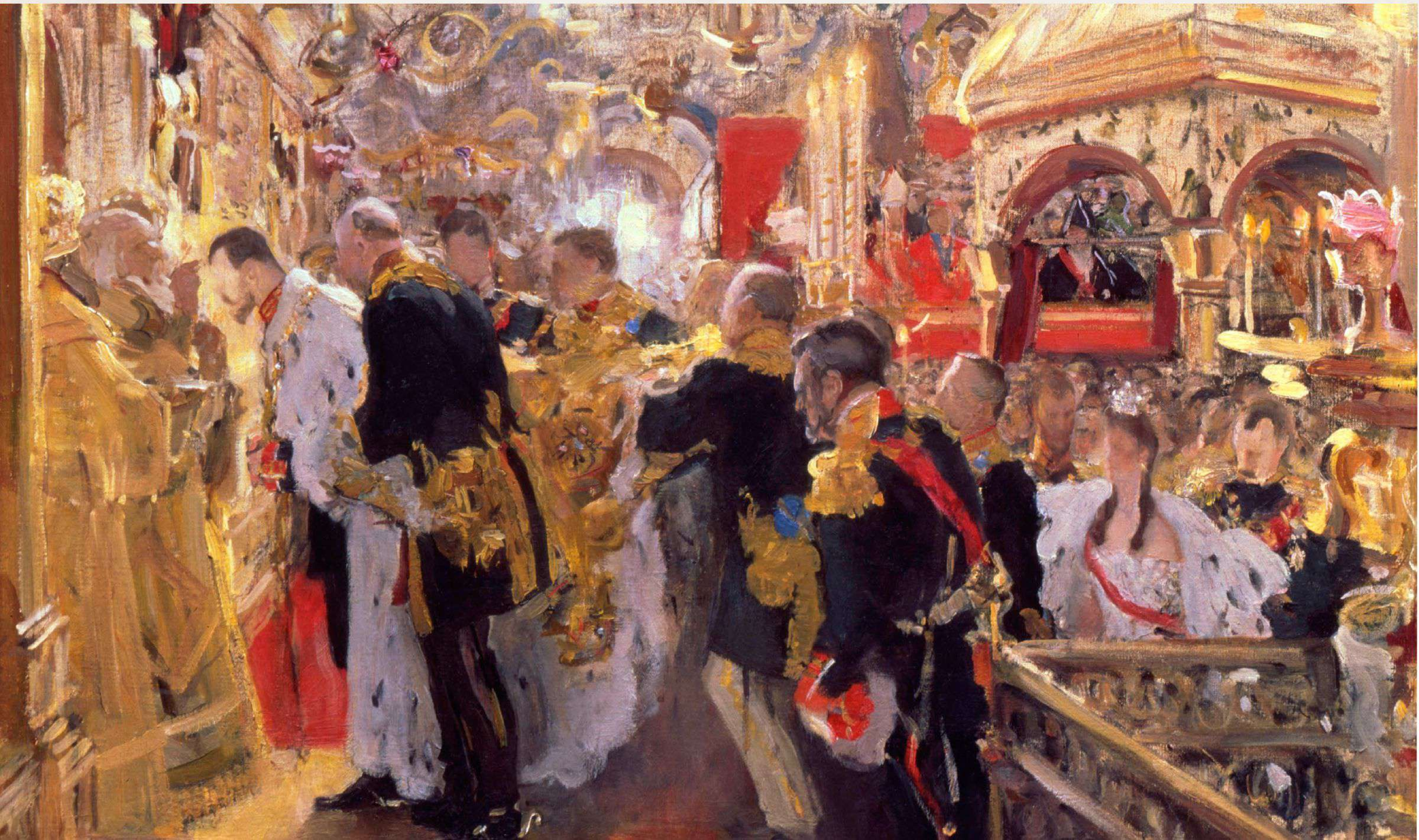
Unfortunately, a lot of royal memorabilia was lost or destroyed following the Russian Revolution, including Alexandra's opulent wedding dress. However, descriptions of the dress do survive and so we know that it was made from embroidered silver cloth and edged with fur, with a neckline low enough to expose her shoulders and a train.

Diamonds adorned the bodice and Alexandra wore the star and sash of the orders of St. Andrei, as well as the red ribbon of the Order of St. Catherine, across the front of her dress. A number of diamond brooches were also added to the dress as a finishing touch.

Alexandra's sister Elizabeth made sure to provide a description of the dress in a letter to Queen Victoria, who was disappointed that she could not attend the wedding. Along with the letter, Elizabeth also included her own sketches of Alexandra wearing the dress for her grandmother to see – while Alexandra herself promised to send a piece of the dress to Victoria as a wedding memento, along with some myrtle and orange blossom.



Empress Alexandra in her wedding dress



She wore a luxurious dress with the imperial gold mantle over the top, trimmed with ermine and held together with the imperial clasp, lace stockings and embroidered shoes. In a nod to her maternal family, Alexandra wore the Honiton lace veil that had been chosen by Prince Albert and subsequently worn by her mother and sisters at their respective weddings.

No royal bride was complete unless she was dripping in jewels and Alexandra wore a 475-carat necklace and earrings that matched the imperial clasp, said to have belonged to Catherine the Great, along with a set of pearls. She also wore the traditional Romanov nuptial crown with a kokoshnik tiara decorated with orange blossoms.

The Dowager Empress and Alexandra, followed by the Tsar, led the procession. Among the royal guests present for the ceremony were King Christian IX of Denmark, King George I and Queen Olga of Greece as well as the Prince and Princess of Wales with their son, George, Duke of York, who were at the ceremony on behalf of Queen Victoria. The queen herself was sadly unable to attend, although she did send Alexandra an array of gifts – including a ring the bride wore on her wedding day – and made Nicholas a Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Scots Greys cavalry regiment.

Archpriest Ioann Yanyshev, chief of the Palace clergy, presided over the wedding. As part of the ceremony, he handed the couple their wedding rings, which they then exchanged three times before saying their wedding vows, all with the nuptial crowns above their heads. At the end, Nicholas and Alexandra said a final prayer before they were pronounced man and wife.

As the wedding merriment was kept at a minimum, the new Empress felt that the day was just another part of the funeral arrangements. This compounded by the fact that the newlyweds could not hold a reception nor go on a honeymoon to celebrate their union – instead, they returned to Anichkov Palace to spend the evening answering telegrams. Many people in Russia saw the marriage as a bad omen due to it taking place so soon after the death of Alexander.

After their wedding, Nicholas famously wrote in his journal that 'my bliss is without bounds.' When Alix discovered this entry, she decided to add to it, declaring 'never did I believe there could be such utter happiness in this world. I love you!' The devotion of the Tsar and Tsarina would remain for their rest of their lives, until their early and tragic demise at the hands of the Bolsheviks in 1918.

**Members of the European royal families gathered together in Coburg, 1894**

gettyimages

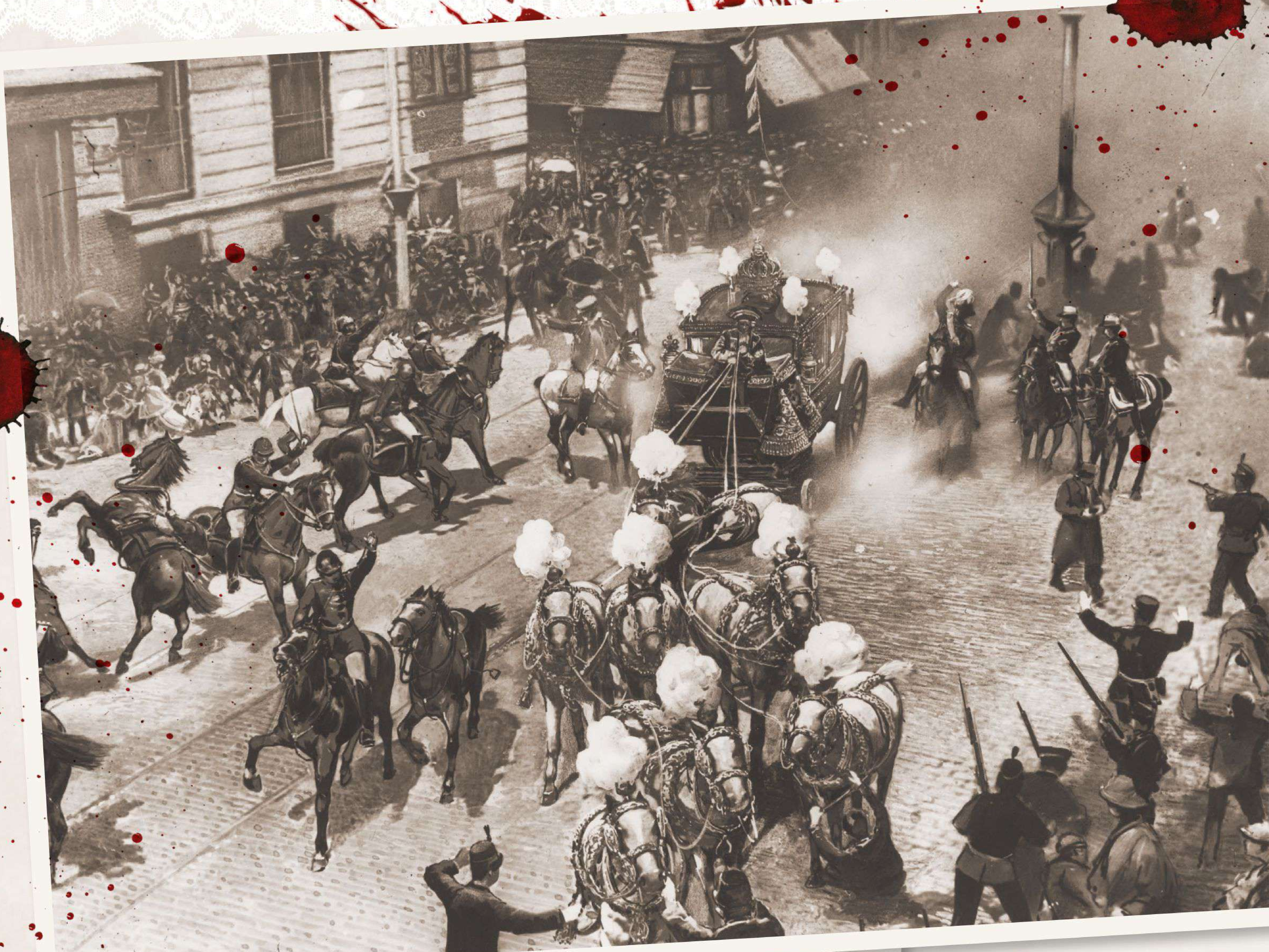
**The official engagement photograph of Nicholas and Alix**

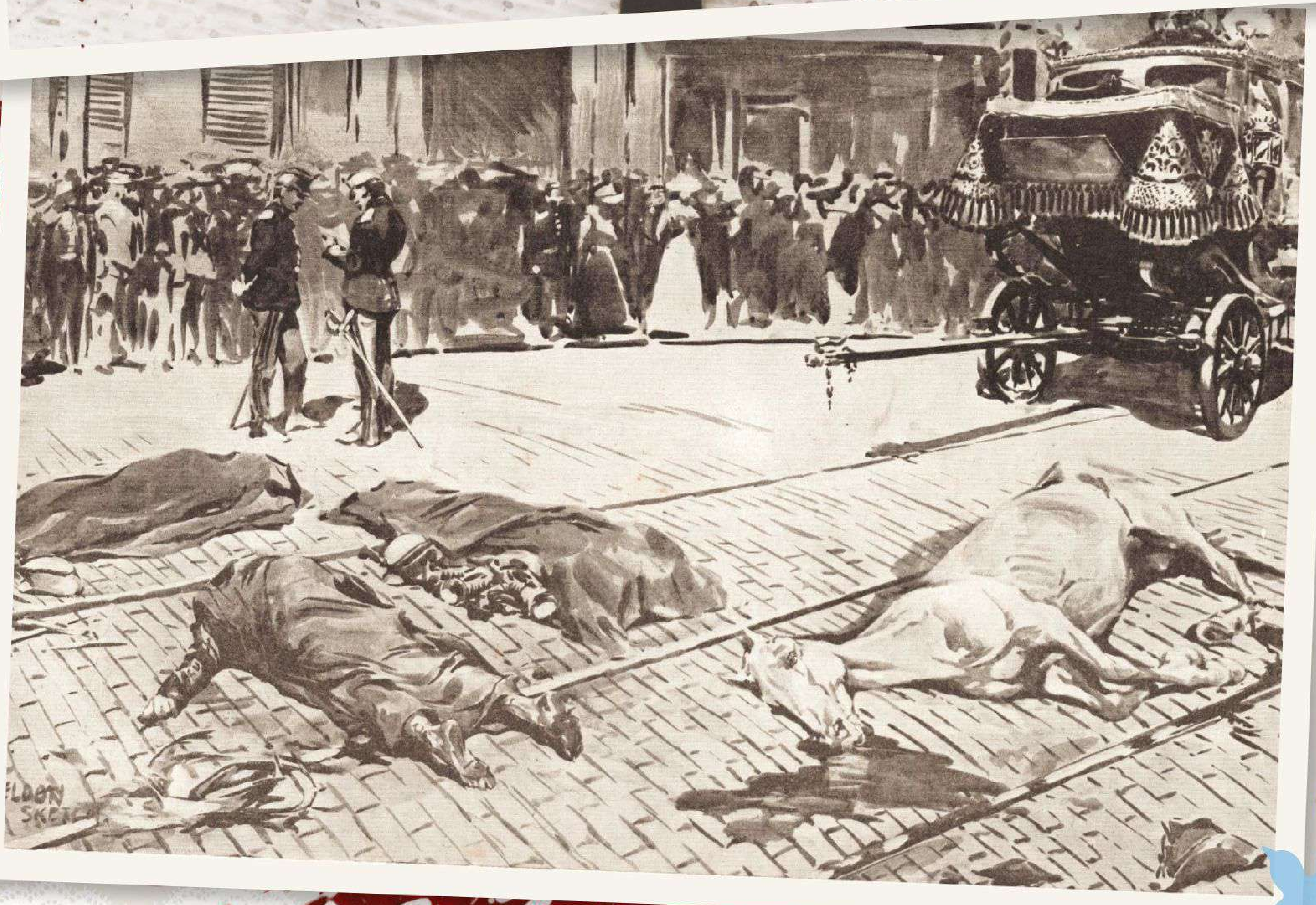
© Getty Images; Alamy; WIKI

## Alexander I of Serbia & Draga Mašin

*5 August 1900*

It was far from the wedding of the century. The public were outraged at the match – Draga had been Alexander's mistress, and she was a commoner with no dowry – but the king refused to marry another. In August, the ceremony took place and Alexander banned his own parents. The police were ordered to prevent his father from entering the building while he threatened to try his mother for treason because of the letters and postcards she wrote vilifying Draga.





> “Among the dead were nobility, military and wellwishers who had come to take part in the biggest royal wedding Madrid had seen in decades”

*You are cordially invited to*

# THE Royal Wedding Bloodbath OF King Alfonso XIII & Princess Victoria Eugenie

Written by June Woolerton

It was the recipe for a perfect royal wedding. The groom was a young king who had fallen head over heels for his new wife. The bride was a pretty princess who had called Queen Victoria grandmamma. Their romance caught the imagination of people around Europe and tens of thousands of wellwishers lined the streets of Madrid on 31 May 1906 to see Alfonso XIII of Spain and his new queen, Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg, ride in triumph from their glittering marriage ceremony to the illustrious wedding reception that was to take place at the Royal Palace of Madrid.

The crowds cheered and jostled for the best positions while some threw flowers and confetti to celebrate. But among the petals was a deadly wedding gift. As the king and queen of Spain approached the heart of the city, a bouquet containing a bomb was launched at their carriage.

Alfonso XIII had been king of Spain since the moment of his birth and had grown into a fiery and arrogant young man

Pretty but shy and sheltered, Princess Ena wasn't first pick as bride for King Alfonso XIII of Spain

The man who threw it, Mateo Morral, had aimed directly for the royal party but the bomb was deflected on its descent from a high window of the building where the would-be assassin stood. It landed next to the wedding carriage and close to the crowds that had gathered to see the bride and groom as they made their way along the Calle Mayor, one of the most famous streets in Madrid, and exploded instantly.

Just moments earlier, the new queen had turned her head to look at a church that her husband was pointing out to her. That action was credited with saving her life. The glass windows of the carriage shattered, the horses bolted and people all around them fell to the ground. However, Alfonso and Victoria Eugenie were uninjured and were quickly taken to safety. Morral fled amid the chaos.

The moment of the explosion was captured forever by a spectator, Eugenio Mesonero Romanos, whose famous photo of the bomb going off appeared in papers around the world in the following days. It showed the beginnings of the terrifying afternoon that would claim dozens of lives and leave over 100 people injured. Among the dead were nobility, military and wellwishers who had come to take part in the biggest royal wedding Madrid had seen for decades.

While the city began to count the cost of the bomb, King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenie were expected to carry on with their royal duties. They appeared to the public at the Royal Palace and then walked into their wedding reception, which was attended by royalty from around Europe, with the queen still in her bridal gown, now spattered with blood.

It was a terrifying introduction for the queen but her husband was already used to attempts on his life, despite having only just turned 20. Just a year before, Morral may have tried to kill him in Paris by throwing a bomb at his car as he left the opera. In 1903, a gunman had taken aim at him as he returned home from church. Alfonso remained as calm during these two attacks as he did during the wedding day bombing but this king had known plenty of turbulence in his two decades. After all, his whole life had been an unusual mix of tragedy and drama.

> “This royal bride’s naïve enthusiasm for excitement blinded her to any potential dangers”

Alfonso had been king of Spain from the moment of his birth on 17 May 1886. His father, Alfonso XII, had died in November 1885 aged just 27 following a short reign that had seen the Bourbon monarchy restored after a period of exile. Alfonso XII attempted to introduce political stability following decades of turmoil and became popular for his common touch and willingness to engage with his people.

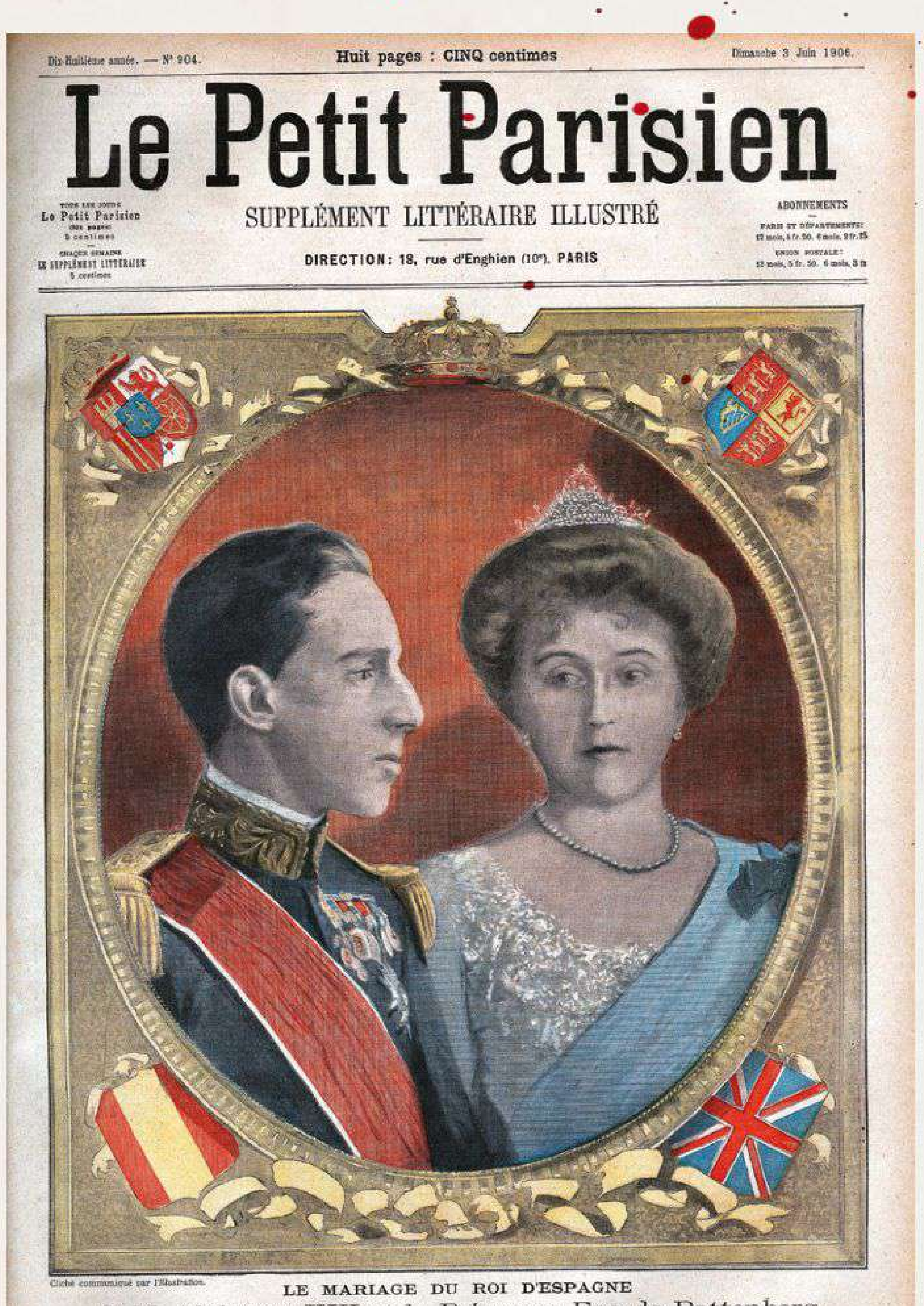
Following the birth of Alfonso XII’s son six months after his death, his widow, Queen Maria Christina, ruled as regent with the aim of solidifying the throne for the new king. When he was just 16, Alfonso XIII took the reins of power and seemed to relish his position from the off. His father had introduced a system for rotating government between the conservative and liberal parties and Alfonso embraced this wholeheartedly, although it would ultimately lead to instability. The young king also showed a keen interest in the military but his headstrong personality won him enemies from an early age.

However, that determination to do things his own way had been a big factor in ensuring his royal wedding happened in the first place. His bride had been nowhere near the top of anyone’s list as a potential queen of Spain but her own naïveté and Alfonso’s ambition had produced a royal wedding like no other in the space of little more than a year.

Victoria Eugenie Julia Ena, born at Balmoral on 24 October 1887, was the youngest granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Allegedly among her godmothers was the exiled Empress Eugenie of France, after whom she was named. It was hardly a good omen. The empress was living in England after being sent into exile with her husband, Napoleon III, who had died soon after arriving at his new home.

Ena, as the young princess was always called, also had to put up with the sneers of Europe’s upper classes over her lineage. While her mother, Princess Beatrice, was the youngest child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, her father had a much lowlier family tree. Prince Henry of Battenberg was the son of Prince Alexander of Hesse and by Rhine and a mere countess, Julia Hauke, whose marriage had been remarkably unequal. That lack of blue blood was raised as an objection almost as soon as Alfonso first set his sights on Ena in 1905. Not even the steely arguments of his very regal mother, who was concerned Ena might carry the potentially deadly condition haemophilia, so prevalent among Queen Victoria’s descendants, could persuade him to change his mind.

Ena, meanwhile, was swept off her feet. She had grown up behind palace walls with little experience of real life. Her father had died when she was just ten years old, while one of the conditions of her parents’ marriage had allegedly been that the whole family live with Queen Victoria on a permanent basis. Ena’s childhood was spent as the companion of the old queen.


Dix-Huitième année. — N° 904.
Huit pages : CINQ centimes
Dimanche 3 Juin 1906.
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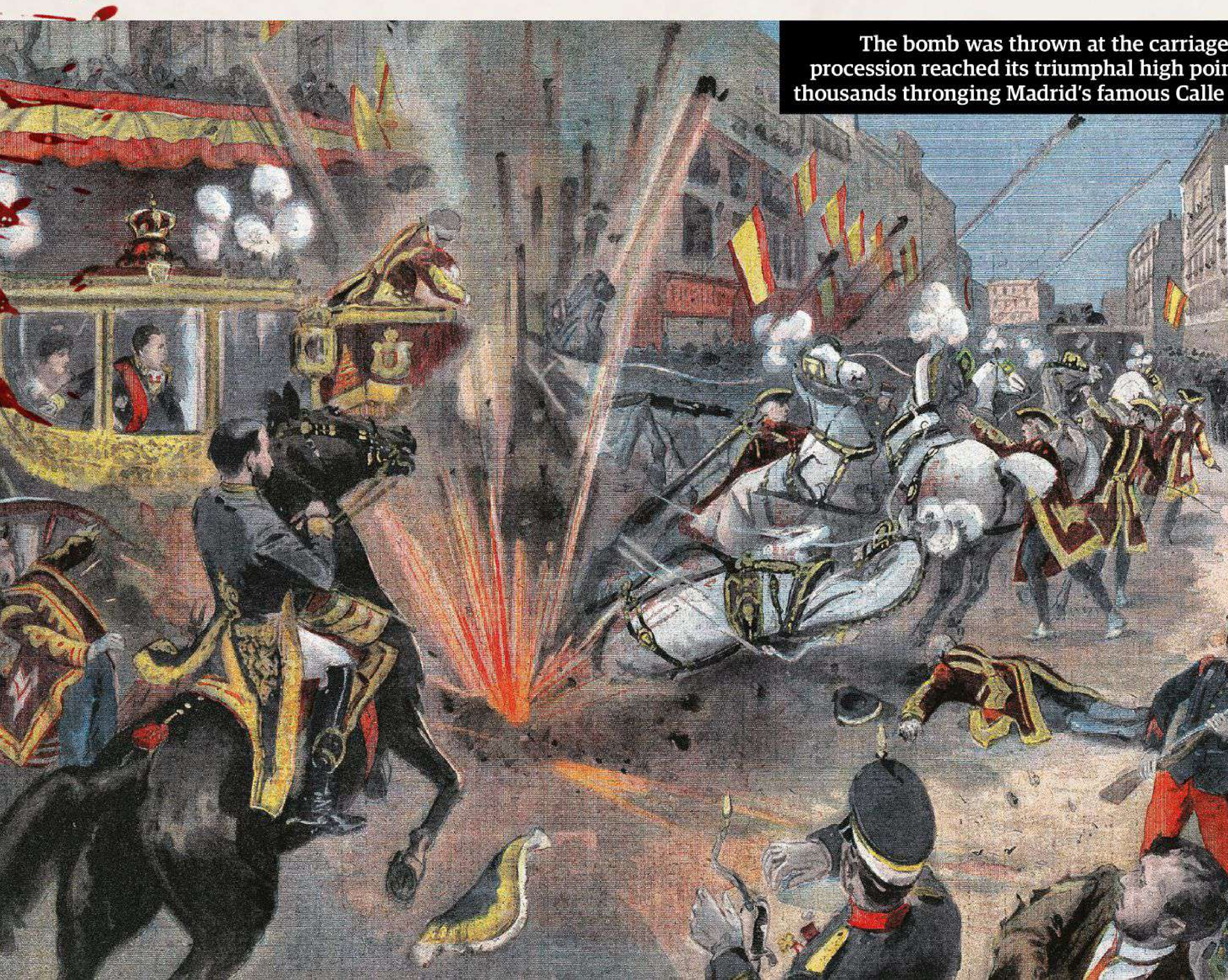
DIRECTION: 18, rue d'Enghien (10e). PARIS
ABONNEMENTS
LE MARIAGE DU ROI D'ESPAGNE
S. M. Alphonse XIII et la Princesse Ena de Battenberg
Published soon after their wedding, this French paper depicts the unity between British and Spanish crowns

By the time Victoria died, Ena was 14 and her sheltered existence continued into the new reign of her uncle, Edward VII. Shy and unworldly, the attentions of a young king who promised a life of adventure away from the walls of Britain’s castles proved irresistible. The papers might have been full of the political problems pressing Spain but this royal bride’s naïve enthusiasm for excitement blinded her to any potential dangers that the marriage might bring.

Alfonso wooed her with love letters and their engagement was seemingly sealed after a chaperoned stay in Biarritz in France. Ena then apparently travelled to San Sebastián to meet her future husband’s family. In the space of a few months her future had changed from one of editing her grandmother’s diaries to a world of new experiences with the promise of a crown at the end of it all.

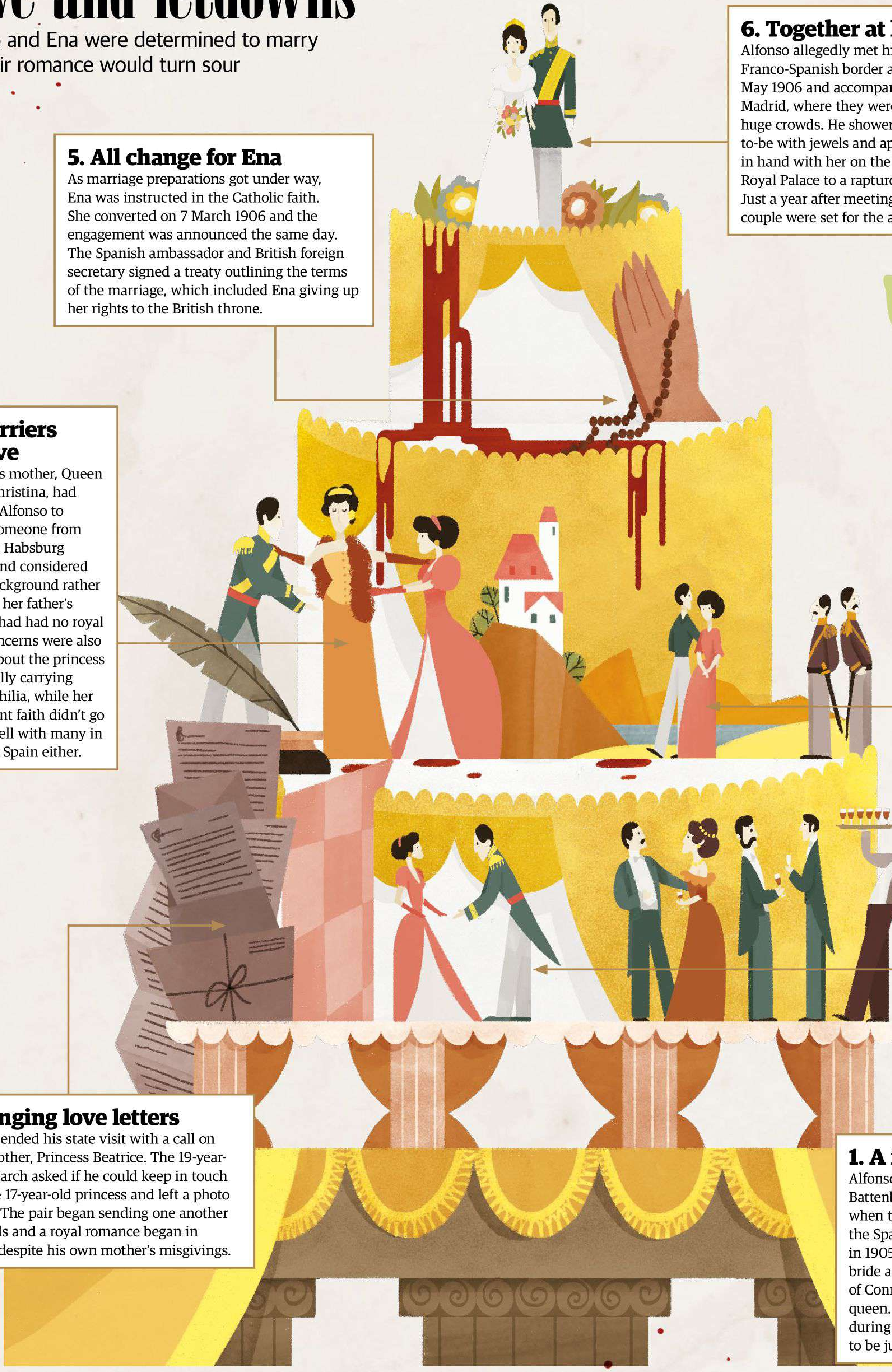
The quiet princess was suddenly important. Ena reportedly spent time in France preparing to convert


The bomb was thrown at the carriage as the procession reached its triumphal high point with thousands thronging Madrid’s famous Calle Mayor

A monument to the victims of the 1906 attack still stands in Madrid today

# Love and letdowns

Alfonso and Ena were determined to marry but their romance would turn sour



### 1. A formal beginning

Alfonso XIII and Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg were both still teenagers when they fell for one another during the Spanish king's state visit to England in 1905. Alfonso was on the hunt for a bride and Ena's cousin, Princess Patricia of Connaught, was lined up as a potential queen. But Alfonso was charmed by Ena during a formal dinner and she turned out to be just as smitten.

### 2. Longing love letters

Alfonso ended his state visit with a call on Ena's mother, Princess Beatrice. The 19-year-old monarch asked if he could keep in touch with the 17-year-old princess and left a photo for Ena. The pair began sending one another postcards and a royal romance began in earnest despite his own mother's misgivings.

### 3. A whirlwind romance

Maria Christina finally relented and in January 1906, Ena and her mother, Beatrice, went to Biarritz to meet Alfonso. The lovebirds enjoyed a romance under the always watchful eyes of chaperones. The groom then took his bride to San Sebastián to meet his mother.

### 4. Barriers to love

Alfonso's mother, Queen Maria Christina, had wanted Alfonso to marry someone from her own Habsburg family and considered Ena's background rather lowly as her father's mother had had no royal title. Concerns were also raised about the princess potentially carrying haemophilia, while her Protestant faith didn't go down well with many in Catholic Spain either.

### 5. All change for Ena

As marriage preparations got under way, Ena was instructed in the Catholic faith. She converted on 7 March 1906 and the engagement was announced the same day. The Spanish ambassador and British foreign secretary signed a treaty outlining the terms of the marriage, which included Ena giving up her rights to the British throne.

### 6. Together at last

Alfonso allegedly met his bride at the Franco-Spanish border at the end of May 1906 and accompanied her to Madrid, where they were met with huge crowds. He showered his queen-to-be with jewels and appeared hand in hand with her on the balcony of the Royal Palace to a rapturous reception. Just a year after meeting, the young couple were set for the altar.

to Roman Catholicism, as the terms of her marriage dictated. The wedding was sealed with international treaties, while Alfonso prepared a vast jewellery collection worth hundreds of thousands of pounds for his blushing bride.

Ena arrived in Spain shortly before her wedding day and travelled to Madrid through apparently never-ending crowds of cheering Spaniards. Days before their marriage, Alfonso led her out onto the balcony of his palace where thousands celebrated and shouted their approval as the young couple held hands. But by then Mateo Morral was making his plans to end this royal fairytale before it even had a chance to begin.

Morral was the son of a factory owner from Barcelona and had been educated abroad as well as at home. His increasing interest in the anarchist movement and hatred for Spain's ruling classes seemed to take hold during a stay in Germany and when he returned home in 1899, he showed fanatical support for workers' rights and the intermittent strikes that were taking place at the time in Catalonia. His supposed failed assassination attempt on Alfonso XIII in 1905 only further fuelled his anger at the monarchy. Days before the royal wedding was due to take place, he was seen carving a message into a tree in the Retiro Park in Madrid which warned that Alfonso would die on the day of his marriage.

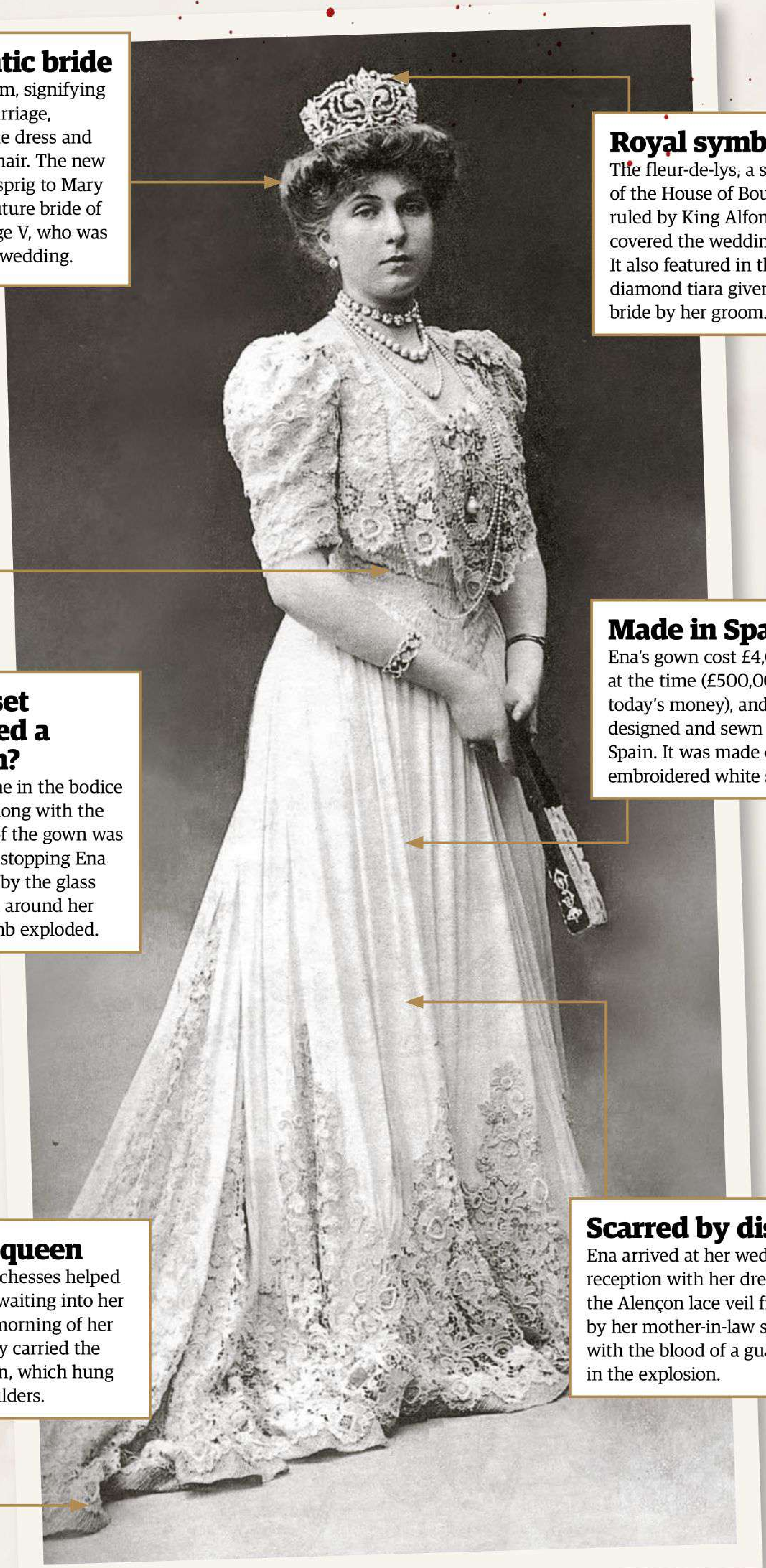
By then, Morral was in possession of the bomb with which he intended to kill the king and queen. It was an Orsini device, reportedly made in France, designed to explode on impact. On the morning of 31 May 1906, while Alfonso XIII collected his bride from the Royal Palace of El Pardo so they could attend Mass together ahead of their marriage, Morral was making his final preparations for the attack in a room at 84 Calle Mayor.

> *“They were just minutes into their route, with church bells still ringing”*

Princess Ena was dressed for her wedding at the Ministry of the Marine and rode to the Monastery Church of San Jerónimo in Madrid through streets decked with the Spanish flag. The church had been filled with flowers and electric lights had been put into its gloomy arches for the occasion. In its cramped pews sat European royalty including the Prince and Princess of Wales (the future George V and Queen Mary), and the heirs to the thrones of Belgium, Greece and Monaco. The bride walked down the aisle accompanied by her mother and future mother-in-law to be met by her groom. The ceremony, conducted by the archbishop of Toledo, went well and the couple headed out into the sunshine for their triumphal procession home.

# The bloodied bridal gown

A queen's dream dress that became a reminder of tragedy



**A romantic bride**
Orange blossom, signifying purity and marriage, featured on the dress and in the bride's hair. The new queen gave a sprig to Mary of Teck, the future bride of Britain's George V, who was a guest at the wedding.

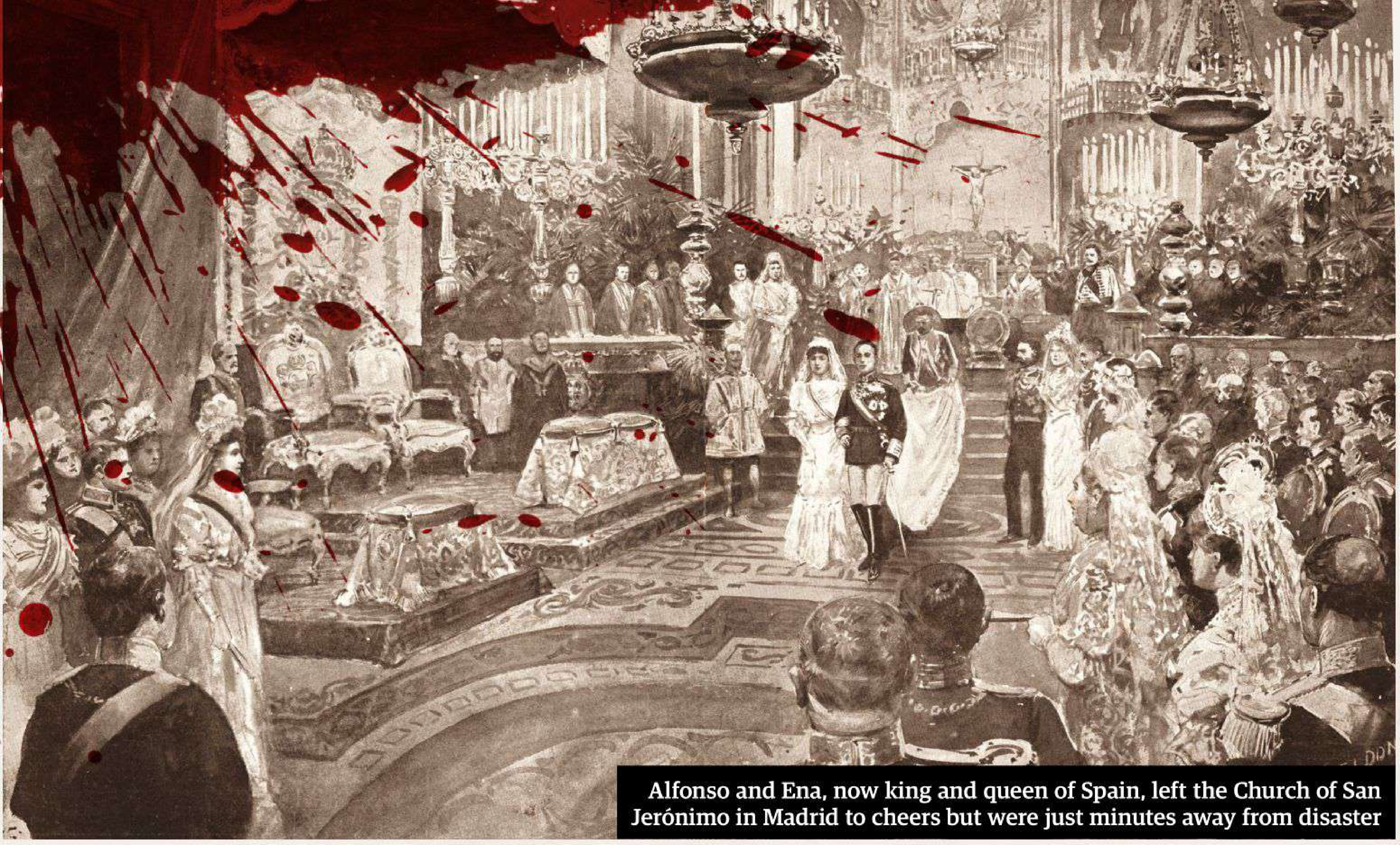
**Royal symbolism**
The fleur-de-lys, a symbol of the House of Bourbon ruled by King Alfonso XIII, covered the wedding gown. It also featured in the huge diamond tiara given to the bride by her groom.

**The corset that saved a monarch?**
The whalebone in the bodice of the dress along with the heavy fabric of the gown was credited with stopping Ena being injured by the glass that shattered around her when the bomb exploded.

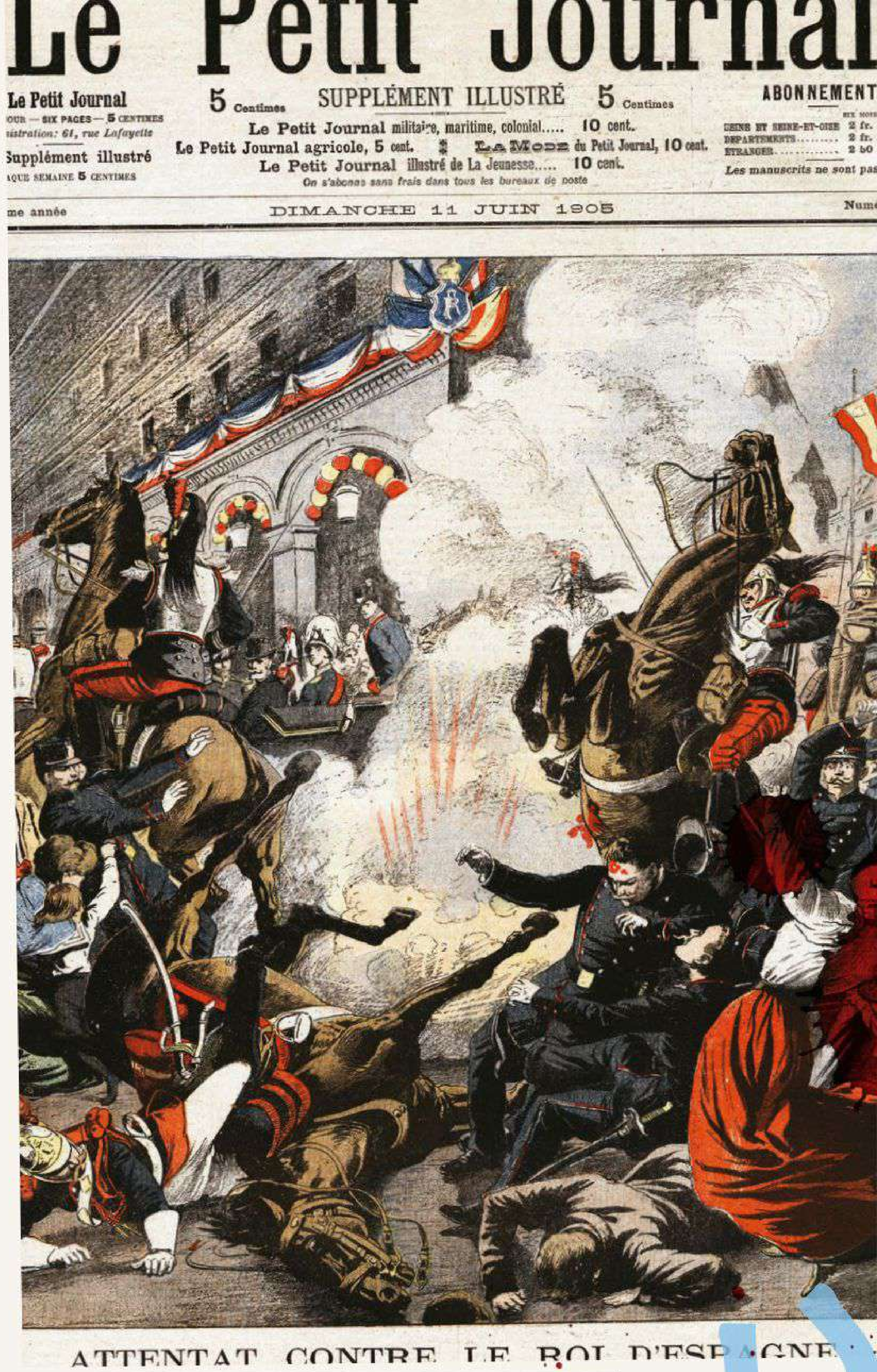
**Made in Spain**
Ena's gown cost £4,000 at the time (£500,000 in today's money), and was designed and sewn in Spain. It was made of hand-embroidered white satin.

**Fit for a queen**
12 Spanish duchesses helped the queen-in-waiting into her dress on the morning of her wedding. They carried the 4.5-metre train, which hung from her shoulders.

**Scarred by disaster**
Ena arrived at her wedding reception with her dress and the Alençon lace veil first worn by her mother-in-law spattered with the blood of a guard killed in the explosion.



Alfonso and Ena, now king and queen of Spain, left the Church of San Jerónimo in Madrid to cheers but were just minutes away from disaster



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ATTENTAT CONTRE LE ROI D'ESPAGNE

The attack, and the suicide of the bomber Mateo Morral, made headlines around the world

King Alfonso and Queen Ena rode in a coach drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, one of 19 royal carriages in the parade that was designed to put on a show for the crowds who had come to celebrate. They were just minutes into their route, with church bells still ringing and cannons still firing, when Morral threw his bomb.

Among those killed were six soldiers, two officers and the head of the king's escort. The marchioness of Colosa and her 14-year-old daughter also died in the attack as did one of the grooms and several of the horses. Morral was reportedly helped to escape by a journalist, José Nakens, and disappeared. However, he was spotted at Torrejón de Ardoz, where it's thought he was hoping to catch a train back to Barcelona on 2 June 1906. He seemed to give himself up without a fight but he shot one of his guards soon afterwards and ended up dead from a gunshot wound himself. The official report said that he had committed suicide.

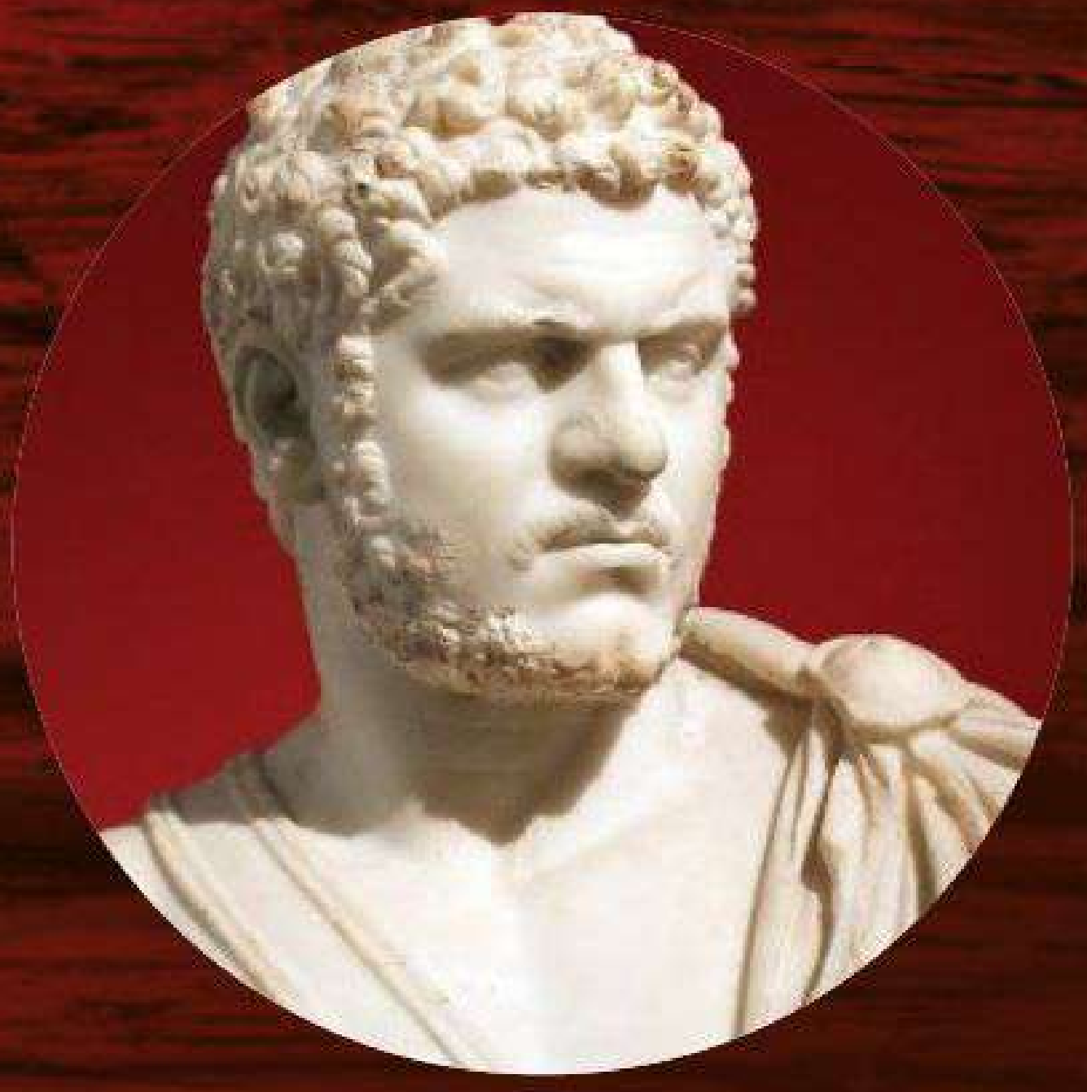
Alfonso and Ena began their marriage by putting on a PR show. The day after the wedding, the couple drove through Madrid in an open-topped car to show that royal life would carry on as normal. The new queen, perhaps unsurprisingly, seemed downcast and reticent, leading to criticism. Ena's honeymoon was over before it had begun.

Ultimately, there was to be no happy ending for Alfonso and Ena. Two of their sons inherited haemophilia, despite protestations before the marriage. Ena was held completely responsible for their health problems and Alfonso's erratic attitude contributed to the political turmoil that sent Spain's royals into exile in 1931.

A monument still stands in Madrid to all those killed in the bomb attack launched against Alfonso and Ena in May 1906. The lives lost and the damage done turned this royal wedding into a tragedy in an instant.

## Real-life red weddings

Plots, poisonings and massacres – when the joining of royal houses go wrong



### Roman Emperor Caracalla and a princess of Parthia

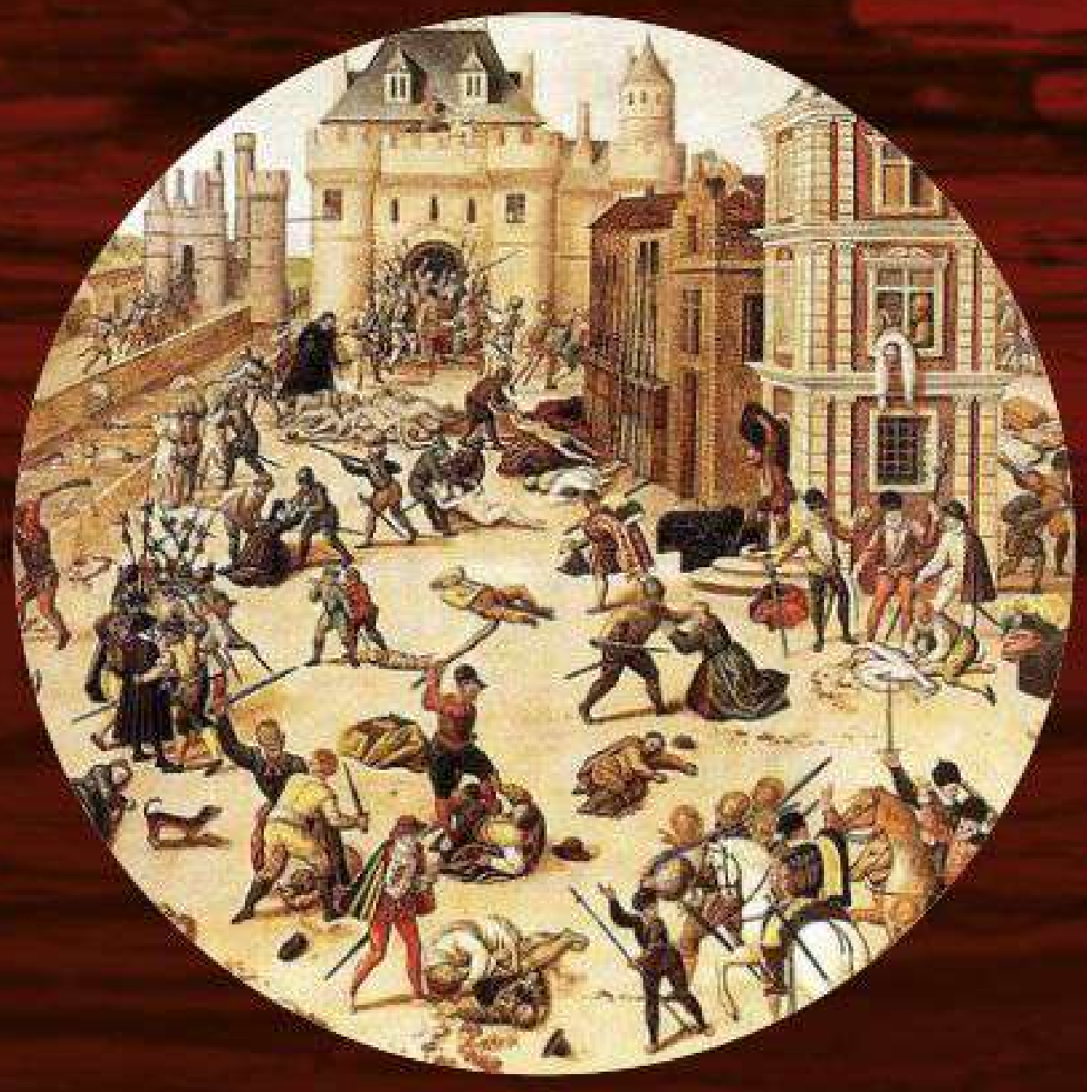
According to Herodian, Emperor Caracalla proposed marriage to a daughter of King Artabanus V of Parthia in 216 CE. The father of the bride was suspicious but, legend has it, ended up agreeing to the match only to see his new son-in-law's troops attack the wedding party as the vows were being said. The poor bride was killed so quickly that her name has been forgotten by history.

### Saint Olga of Kiev and Prince Mal of the Drevlians

Olga's beloved husband, Igor, was killed by the Drevlians in 945. The story goes that when the offending tribe sent messengers to Olga proposing a marriage to a prince called Mal, she had them buried alive. A cohort sent to accompany her to the wedding was burned to death. Olga then organised a massacre that killed thousands of people before setting fire to a city using sparrows.

### Mary, Queen of Scots, and James, Earl of Bothwell

This royal relationship brought a disastrous end to not one but two royal weddings. In 1567, the Earl of Bothwell was accused of murdering Mary's second husband, Lord Darnley. Days after being acquitted of the killing, he abducted Mary and married her. The union was hugely unpopular and weeks later, Bothwell fled Scotland while Mary was imprisoned and forced to abdicate.



### King Henry III of Navarre and Margaret of Valois

Protestant Henry's marriage to Catholic Margaret on 18 August 1572 in Paris arguably led to the infamous Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Their wedding was part of a peace pact but on 24 August, thousands of Protestants in the city to celebrate the marriage were killed. Rumours swirled that Margaret's mother, Catherine de' Medici, had poisoned Henry's mother, Jeanne, earlier that summer.

### Prince Amadeo of Savoy and Maria Vittoria dal Pozzo

This royal wedding, on 30 May 1867, has gone down in legend for its endless tragedies. The bride's wardrobe mistress allegedly hanged herself and on the wedding day and the palace gatekeeper was found with his throat slit. The best man apparently shot himself while firing his gun in celebrations for the wedding, and the couple's honeymoon train reportedly ran over the stationmaster.

© Alamy, Getty Images

## Manuel II of Portugal & Princess Augusta Viktoria

4 September 1913

When Lohengrin's wedding march struck up at Sigmaringen Castle in Germany, the bride processed down the aisle in a traditional white gown and long lace veil while Manuel, king of Portugal until the monarchy was abolished in 1910, sported short black trousers with knee-high socks, coat and tails. After the wedding, a lunch was held for 150 guests and a choir of girls from the Black Forest, pictured here, sang for the attendees.

© Alamy

18 July 1922

# Louis Mountbatten & Edwina Ashley

Explore the glittering high-society 1920s wedding of Edward VIII's best friend and glamorous heiress

**Written by June Woolerton**

If ever a couple embodied the spirit of the 1920s, it was Lord Louis Mountbatten and Edwina Ashley. The pair seemed to be the personification of the 'Bright Young Things' whose gilded existence would come to epitomise the decade. Beautiful and wealthy, they would become one of the most famous and followed couples in the world for decades and that road to society stardom began with their wedding on 18 July 1922.

Theirs wasn't the first royal wedding that year, but it captured public imagination on a grand scale. Thousands of people turned out to see this beautiful young couple marry and stories of their romance, ceremony and honeymoon filled newspapers and magazines for months following the event. It's little wonder – after all, Louis had royal blood and a bright career in the Royal Navy ahead of him, while Edwina was a glamorous heiress with a fortune almost beyond comprehension. Everything about Louis, known as Dickie to his family, and his bride glittered.

Their romance, which began at a ball given by Grace Vanderbilt at Claridges in the summer of 1921, seemed almost inevitable. From the moment they began dancing with one another at that party, the attraction between them was obvious. They were both lively, witty and barely 20. Their inner circle was instantly impressed by their match and Louis' father, the marquess of Milford Haven, described Edwina as "the most charming and remarkable girl of the generation." She also won over Louis' best friend, the Prince of Wales and future Edward VIII. But behind the smiles, they were in some ways poles apart.

Louis Mountbatten had been born a prince. A great-grandson of Queen Victoria, he had been known as His Serene Highness Prince Louis of Battenberg until 1917 when George V and his family relinquished all of their German titles. He was now Lord Louis Mountbatten but money was tight. By the time he met Edwina, he earned around £600 a year. When he had fallen for debutante Audrey James a few years earlier, his own mother had warned him he was "far too young and poor" to get married.

Money had never been a worry for Edwina. Her maternal grandfather, Sir Ernest Cassel, was one of the wealthiest bankers in England with a fortune running into the millions and by the time she became a teenager, Edwina knew much of it would one day be hers. She had lost her mother at an early age and had ended up living with Sir Ernest, who doted on her. She became his heiress and, while their banking origins might have been frowned upon by some parts of the upper classes, their wealth made them desirable companions in society. They also had royal links of their own – one of Sir Ernest's closest friends had been none other than King Edward VII.

As Louis and Edwina's romance snowballed, his mother once more mentioned her concerns about money, but nothing seemed to stop the young couple moving towards marriage. However, just as Louis prepared to propose in autumn 1921, he lost his beloved father.

Edwina, Countess Mountbatten, poses for Vogue in 1937 in the tiara her husband gave her on their wedding day

## Glittering wedding gifts

Heirloom jewels and top-class cars for a golden couple

Edwina's London residence, Brook House, was worth a small fortune, but its value shot through the roof in July 1922 when it became the setting for an exhibition of her wedding presents. The glamourous couple received gifts from around the world and many were displayed in Brook House's ballroom.

The bride was presented with no less than three tiaras, including a royal heirloom with a dramatic history given to her by Louis. His mother, born Princess Victoria of Hesse and by Rhine, had received diamond hairpins for her own wedding from her grandmother, Queen Victoria, and had turned them into a tiara. But she'd left it in Russia for safekeeping during World War I and it was lost in the Revolution. A royal relation had presented her with a new version of it and it was this tiara, featuring five diamond stars, each with a pearl at its centre, that Louis gave to his new wife. It would become one of her most treasured pieces of jewellery. Edwina received diamond tiaras from her father and her great-aunt, too, while Queen Alexandra presented her with a diamond pendant featuring the royal cypher. There were necklaces, bracelets and rings featuring just about every precious stone imaginable among her gifts while her sister rather sensibly chose a gold jewellery box as a present.

Edwina's gift to her groom was no less lavish – a Rolls-Royce, which Louis had done up to his specifications. There was also a rather sparkling and sentimental gift from the best man, the Prince of Wales. The heir to the throne chose a silver globe engraved with enamel tracings of the routes of the exotic royal tours he had taken with Louis as his present for the couple. It was one of the stars of the glittering display that took over Brook House that summer.

Soon afterwards, Edwina's grandfather, Sir Ernest, passed away. Both were grief-stricken by their losses and put an immediate engagement on hold, but Sir Ernest's death created another obstacle – Edwina couldn't inherit his money until she came of age or got married. Louis was genuinely concerned he would be seen as a gold digger if he proposed now. His family encouraged him to get away and accompany the Prince of Wales on his tour of India. Reluctantly, Louis agreed.

But Edwina wasn't going to let several thousand miles get in the way of their romance. Half joking, Louis had told her she might visit him in India. Edwina somehow wangled a formal invitation from the country's viceroy to visit, aided by society hostess Mrs Greville who would act as chaperone, and arrived in early February 1922. The love-struck couple were soon meeting secretly and on Valentine's Day, Edwina accepted Louis' proposal at a ball. After some panic about securing the necessary permissions to wed, the happy couple finally made their news public and the date was set for July that year.

Back in England, they became the darlings of high society. Endless parties, dinners and lunches were given to celebrate their engagement, while Edwina and Louis quickly set about combining their talents to produce a wedding to remember. The bride knew how to spend money to make an impact while Louis loved to organise. The groom took a major role in planning their celebrations and personally oversaw the invitations that were sent to Europe's royal families.

> *“The love-struck couple were soon meeting secretly”*

The couple's reputation as society stars was reflected in their choice of wedding venue. Saint Margaret's Church in Westminster had been the setting for two of the most famous marriages of recent times with both Winston Churchill and Harold Macmillan holding their nuptials there. Originally built in the 12th century, it was filled with royal history, too, with the young couple planning to tie the knot beneath a stained glass window commemorating the betrothal of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon in 1509.

A crowd of 8,000 people gathered outside the church on Parliament Square on the morning of 18 July 1922 to see the wedding unfold. They weren't disappointed. Endless royal guests streamed past them including King George V and Queen Mary, along with the dowager consort, Queen Alexandra, and her sister, the Dowager Tsarina of Russia. George V's three younger sons were there, as was his daughter, Princess Mary, who had starred in the year's first royal wedding. Louis' sister, Princess Alice of Battenberg, and her husband,

King George V at the wedding with his wife, Queen Mary (right), and his mother, Queen Alexandra (centre)

A portrait of Louis and Edwina on the cover of The Sketch a few days before their wedding

Prince Andrew, joined royalty from Denmark and Germany, all mixing with big names from business and society in a guest list numbering 1,400 people.

In case the crowds were in any doubt as to how fashionable this wedding was, the groom arrived with his best man, the Prince of Wales, to a huge reception. His bride appeared soon afterwards in a bespoke silver wedding dress and accompanied by seven bridesmaids. Among them were four princesses. Margarita, Theodora, Cecilie and Sophie of Greece and Denmark, aged between eight and 17, were the groom's nieces. Their baby brother, one-year-old Prince Philip, had been left at home while they walked down the aisle behind Edwina, who also chose her own sister, Mary Ashley, and glamourous friends, Lady Mary Ashley-Cooper and Joan Esther Pakenham, as attendants. The wedding party was led to the altar by Canon Carnegie, who conducted the service.

Just over an hour later, the crowd was rewarded with their first glimpse of the happy couple as the new Lord and Lady Mountbatten emerged from the church and into a barrage of photographers' lenses. They calmly hopped into their waiting limousine, which was to be towed by naval ratings to the reception at Edwina's London residence, Brook House. Sitting on the corner of Park Lane, its marble-lined entrance hall and Corinthian pillars provided a grand setting for the lavish party. The wedding guests were given a reminder of the bride's own royal connections as they arrived – at the top of one staircase sat a portrait of her grandfather's great friend, King Edward VII.

The wedding breakfast was prepared in the six kitchens that Sir Ernest Cassel had had installed after purchasing the house at the turn of the century. It was rounded off with a traditional and elaborately decorated tiered wedding cake. Afterwards, the couple left for a short stay at another of Edwina's family homes, Broadlands, in Hampshire, knowing that the bride could now inherit her huge fortune.

The newlyweds were one of the wealthiest couples in the country and soon set about spending. Royal honeymoons were usually short and spent sedately at a country house but the Mountbattens had other ideas. From Broadlands, they set off on a five-month adventure that began with the couple driving their Rolls-Royce across Europe to see several of Louis' royal cousins, including Queen Victoria Eugenie of Spain.

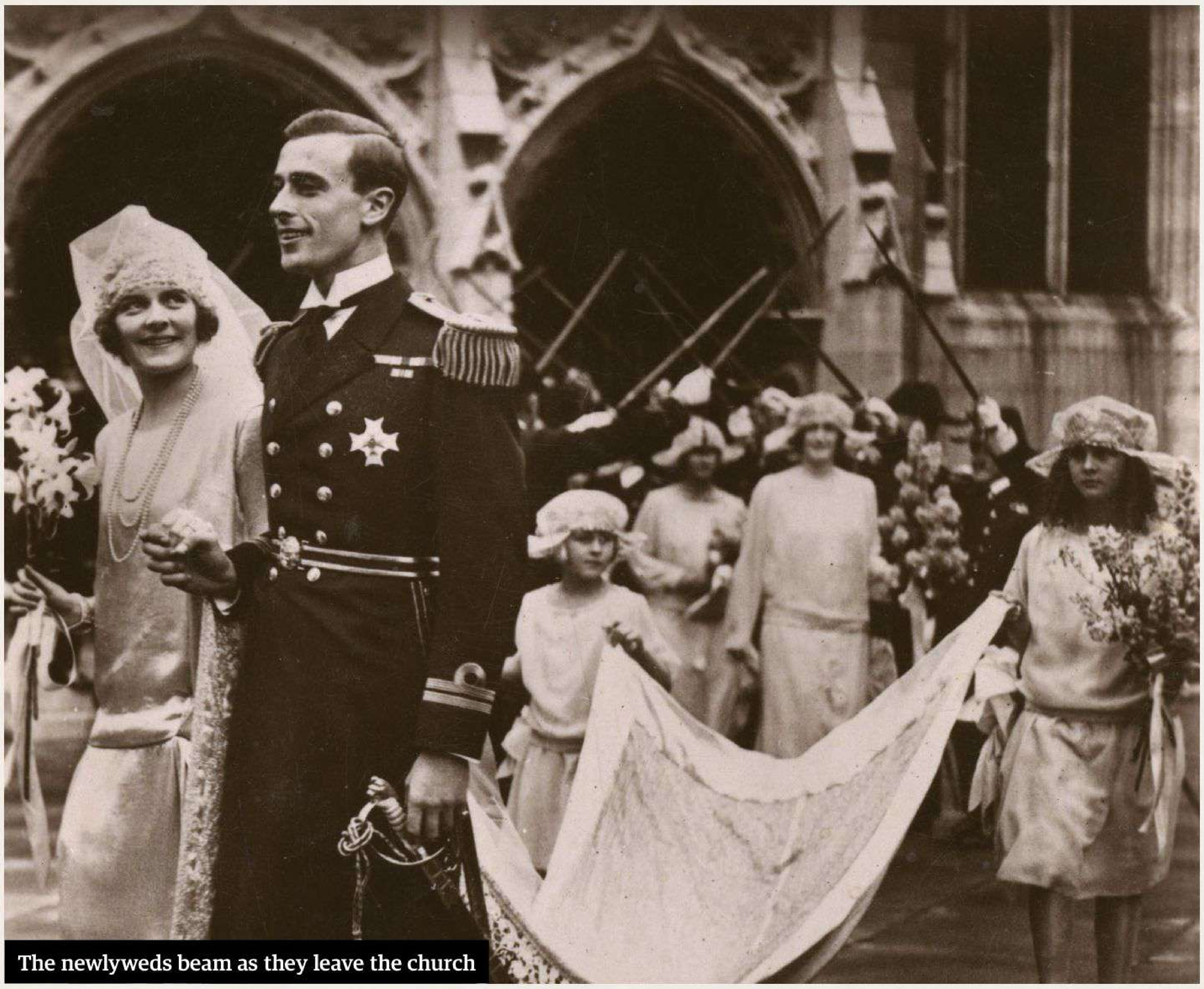
Then it was off to the United States for a stay, which Edwina loved and Louis found almost surreal. Everyone who was anyone wanted to spend time with them. There was an invite to Washington, DC, to see the president, Warren G Harding; a stay in Hollywood where they starred

St Margaret's Church was filled with blue flowers and royal guests for Edwina and Louis' marriage service

> *He was enthusiastic, pragmatic…above all, extremely hard working. She was…fearless and excited by action. They worked well as a team*
>
> **Lady Pamela Hicks, Louis and Edwina's daughter**

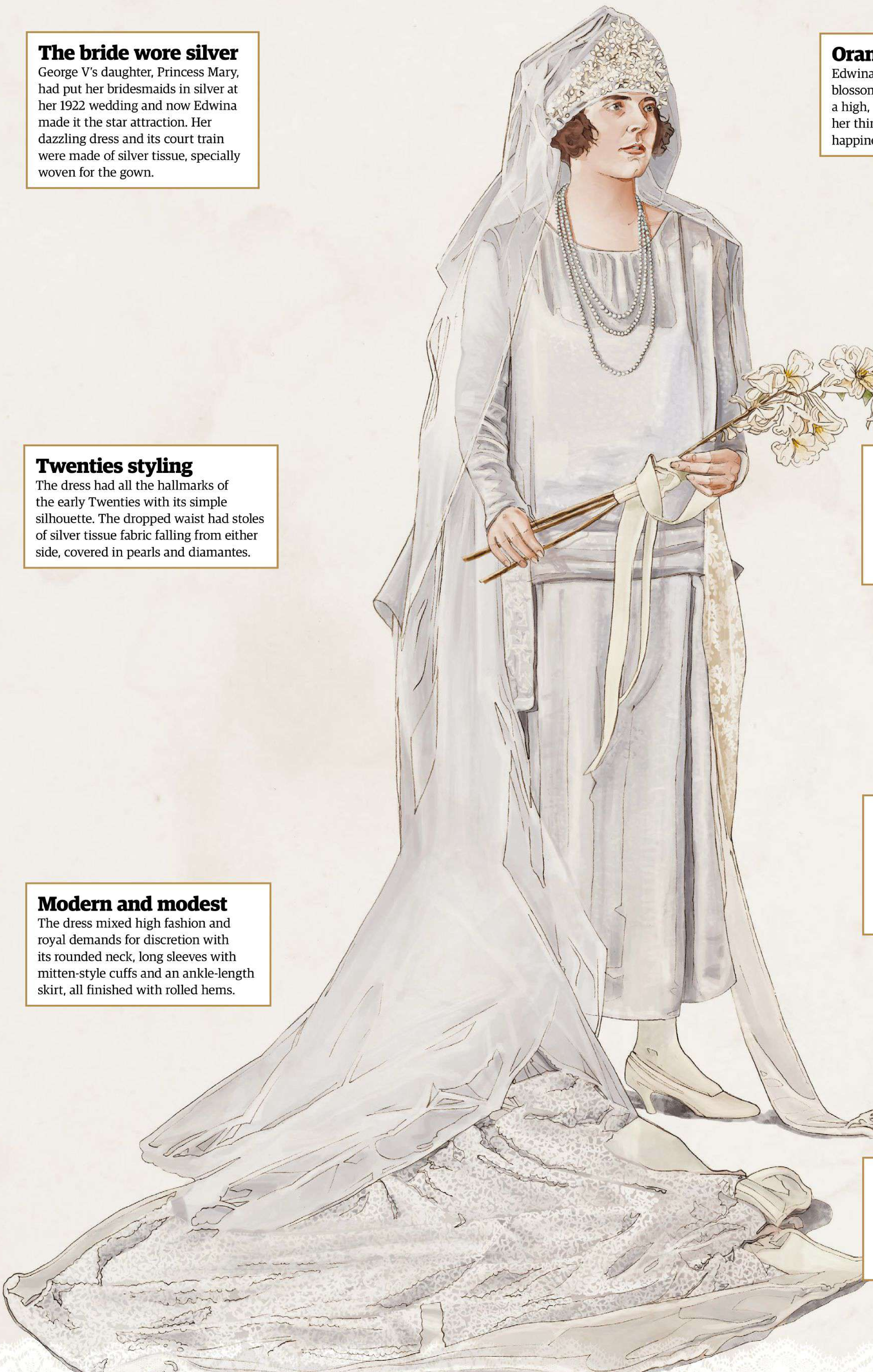
in a silent comedy made just for them by Charlie Chaplin; and a meeting with legendary baseball player Babe Ruth in New York. By the time they returned to England, Lord and Lady Mountbatten were stars in their own rights.

Even when Louis resumed his naval career, they remained in the spotlight. Their glamour and royal connections meant they would never be far from the headlines in their long and much talked about marriage. These Bright Young Things broke the regal mould and merged royalty with celebrity on a scale never seen before with their wedding. It would set the pattern for years to come.



The newlyweds beam as they leave the church

# *Louis Mountbatten & Edwina Ashley*



### The bride wore silver

George V's daughter, Princess Mary, had put her bridesmaids in silver at her 1922 wedding and now Edwina made it the star attraction. Her dazzling dress and its court train were made of silver tissue, specially woven for the gown.

### Twenties styling

The dress had all the hallmarks of the early Twenties with its simple silhouette. The dropped waist had stoles of silver tissue fabric falling from either side, covered in pearls and diamantes.

### Modern and modest

The dress mixed high fashion and royal demands for discretion with its rounded neck, long sleeves with mitten-style cuffs and an ankle-length skirt, all finished with rolled hems.

### Orange blossom tiara

Edwina, like many royal brides, wore orange blossoms in her hair. They were formed into a high, crown-shaped headdress, securing her thin tulle veil. The flowers symbolise happiness and fertility.

### Fashionable flowers

The bridal bouquet was a single stem of Lilium candidum, also known as the Madonna lily, symbolising purity and chastity. Edwina's bridesmaids carried delphiniums, which were also used to decorate the church.

### Haute couture

Fashion house Revillon created Edwina's gown. She also asked them to make her bridesmaids' dresses. Edwina's seven attendants wore on-trend delphinium blue with silver lace caps for their hair.

### Priceless lace

Two pieces of Point de Venise lace ran down either side of the 1.2-metre train, which also featured antique Spanish lace. Both were gifts from Edwina's great-aunt Mrs Cassel.

© Alamy, Getty, Thinkstock, Julia Lillo

## Edward, Duke of Windsor & Wallis Simpson

3 June 1937

The relationship that had shaken the British monarchy to its core culminated in a small wedding shrouded in secrecy. Fewer than 20 guests attended the former king's special day and they didn't even enjoy the luxury of an official photographer. Wallis walked down the aisle to Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* in a blue dress and hat to marry the man who had forfeited his throne for her. The ceremony was followed by champagne, but there was a stark lack of Windsors as the royal family had stayed away from the occasion.

© Getty

### 20 November 1947

# Princess Elizabeth & Prince Philip

As Britain recovered from the horrors of World War II, it basked in the romantic love story of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip

**Written by Jessica Leggett**

Over the last seven decades, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip have been the foundation of the British monarchy. The story of their relationship, from a young romance to their marriage, endeared them to the public at a time when the majority of royals married for duty rather than for love. Their wedding came at a time when the people of Britain, weary from the war, craved a distraction, becoming one of the most celebrated events of the 20th century.

Princess Elizabeth was just eight years old when she first set eyes on her third cousin, Prince Philip, at the wedding of Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark to Prince George, Duke of Kent, in 1934. Five years later they would meet again, at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth in July 1939. This time Elizabeth, now 13 years old, fell head over heels in love for Philip, who had turned into a handsome 18-year-old man.

The pair managed to spend a lot of time together that day, as Philip's uncle, Lord Louis Mountbatten, had arranged for his nephew to chaperone both the princess and her sister, Princess Margaret. After connecting at the college, Elizabeth and Philip agreed to exchange letters while they were apart and soon enough, the princess started to keep a framed photo of her beloved by her bed.

With the outbreak of World War II just months later, Elizabeth and Philip found themselves separated over the next six years, just like millions of other couples across the country. While Philip served in the British Royal Navy, the princess trained as a driver and mechanic, working for the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1945. Elizabeth and Philip remained in contact during such harrowing times, with the latter even making a brief visit to Windsor to watch the princess perform in a pantomime with her sister.

When the war finally ended in 1945, there was a sigh of relief across Great Britain. Elizabeth and Philip were still in love and it became obvious to onlookers that their romance was indeed serious. Elizabeth's father, King George VI, invited Philip to Balmoral in 1946. It was during this visit that the prince took the plunge and asked Elizabeth to marry him, after seeking permission from her father. George consented, but on the condition that the engagement remain a secret until Elizabeth's 21st birthday in April 1947.

However, this was not just about giving Elizabeth time to consider her decision. Her father, along with the rest of the royal family, were concerned that Philip was not a suitable choice for the husband of the future queen. There were no advantages to be made from a marriage between the two – although Philip was a prince, he was practically penniless, and his family had been exiled from Greece after the abdication of his uncle, King Constantine I.

In addition to this, Elizabeth's family were well aware of the chaotic situation of Philip's parents. While Elizabeth had a close and loving upbringing, Philip was left alone to be raised in boarding schools. His mother, Princess Alice of Battenberg, was suffering with mental illness while his philandering father abandoned the family. With parents such as these, there were grave doubts that Philip would not remain faithful to Elizabeth.

The young couple looked very much in love on their wedding day

Elizabeth walking up the aisle at Westminster Abbey with her father

> *Wedding fever was running high throughout the nation*

There were also concerns about Philip's connection to the Nazis in the wake of World War II. All four of his older sisters had married Nazis and when one of them, Cecile, died in a plane crash in 1937, a young Philip was pictured at her funeral surrounded by the Nazis.

Of course, it was also impossible to forget the domineering presence of Philip's uncle and mentor, Lord Mountbatten. Ambitious and determined, it was no secret that Mountbatten was actively campaigning in favour of the relationship – to the point where Philip apparently admitted that his uncle was placing a lot of pressure on him to ask for Elizabeth's hand in marriage.

It is said that Elizabeth's mother, Queen Elizabeth, referred to her future son-in-law as "the Hun" and that even the prime minister, Winston Churchill, was suspicious of the prince. Though Elizabeth was excited about her future with Philip, her family secretly hoped that within a year she would have changed her mind.

Elizabeth may have been a naturally shy woman, but her family wholly underestimated her determination to marry Philip. Adamant that she would only marry him, King George and Queen Elizabeth were eventually forced to accept their daughter's relationship.

In the lead up to the announcement of their engagement, Prince Philip renounced his Greek and Danish titles and became a naturalised British citizen, subsequently adopting the last name 'Mountbatten', which was from his mother's British family. Philip also converted to Anglicanism in preparation for his marriage to the future Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

On the 9 July 1947, less than three months after Elizabeth's 21st birthday, the royal engagement was announced to the world. While the couple basked in the happiness, it seemed that it was not only Elizabeth's families that had reservations about the match. A newspaper poll that was held soon after the announcement indicated that 40% of the public were against the marriage – unsurprising, as Philip was considered too 'German' following the conclusion of the war.

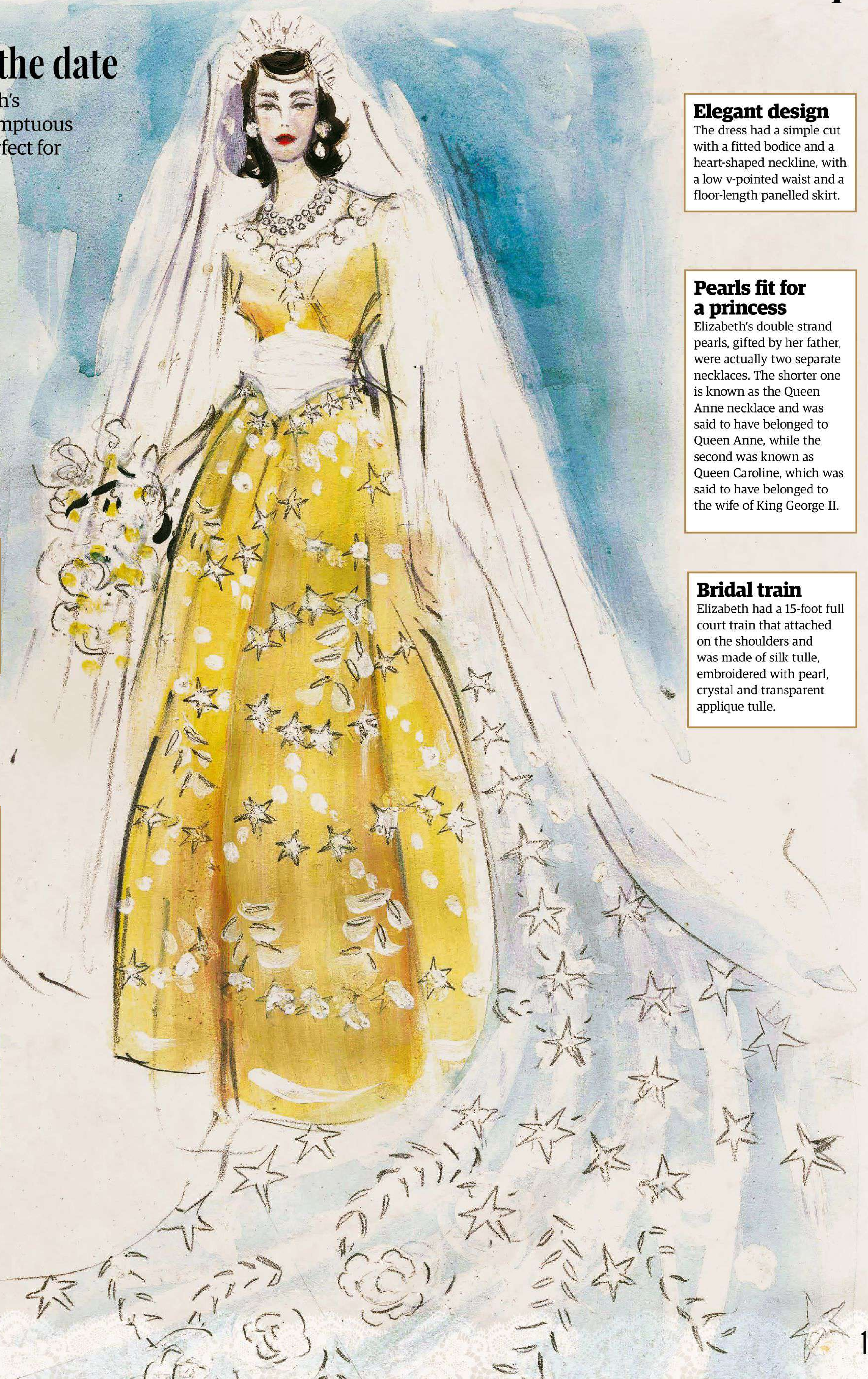
Yet when it became clear that the couple were marrying for love rather than duty, those who initially opposed the marriage soon warmed up to it. After all, a glamorous royal wedding was a welcome distraction for many in Great Britain and a great way to boost morale in the country.

With the wedding date set for the 20 November and with just four months to plan the event, preparations quickly got under way. It wasn't until mid-August that the design for Elizabeth's wedding dress, by Sir Norman Hartnell, was approved, giving the renowned designer less than three months to create his masterpiece.

Wedding fever was running high throughout the nation (and worldwide), but with post-war austerity still in place, Elizabeth had to save up her clothing ration coupons in order to pay for the material of her dress – in total it took 3,000 coupons. To help her, hundreds of brides-to-be sent their own coupons to the princess so that she could use

# Dressing for the date

Fit for a queen, Elizabeth's wedding dress was a sumptuous but modest creation perfect for the post-war years



**Elegant design**
The dress had a simple cut with a fitted bodice and a heart-shaped neckline, with a low v-pointed waist and a floor-length panelled skirt.

**Pearls fit for a princess**
Elizabeth's double strand pearls, gifted by her father, were actually two separate necklaces. The shorter one is known as the Queen Anne necklace and was said to have belonged to Queen Anne, while the second was known as Queen Caroline, which was said to have belonged to the wife of King George II.

**Patriotic patronage**
The wedding dress was made with sumptuous duchesse satin, which had been sourced from the firm of Wintherthur, near Dunfermline in Scotland.

**Art inspiration**
Hartnell stated that he had been inspired by Botticell's famous painting, Primavera, which symbolises the coming of spring - hence the applique motifs of flowers on the bridal train.

**Bridal train**
Elizabeth had a 15-foot full court train that attached on the shoulders and was made of silk tulle, embroidered with pearl, crystal and transparent applique tulle.

**Dainty decoration**
The dress was decorated with crystals and around 10,000 seed pearls, which had been imported from the United States. Meanwhile, the satin for the applique was produced at Lullingstone Castle in Kent.

**Delicate shoes**
Elizabeth wore ivory duchesse satin high-heeled sandals which were trimmed with silver and seed peal buckles, made by Edward Rayne.

Crowds lined the streets just to get a glimpse of the bride

them. Although this was a very endearing gesture, the coupons all had to be returned to their owners as it would have been illegal for Elizabeth to use them because they belonged to others.

The government did provide Elizabeth with 200 extra coupons to pay for her wedding dress while Philip, never one for extravagance and spending, planned to wear his naval uniform for the big day. The couple would marry at London's Westminster Abbey, where Elizabeth's parents, King George and Queen Elizabeth, had married just over 24 years earlier, making the princess the tenth member of the royal family to be in this spectacular setting.

> *“Prince Philip was made Duke of Edinburgh”*

It was decided that the princess would have eight bridesmaids including her sister HRH Princess Margaret, her cousin HRH Princess Alexandra of Kent, Lady Caroline Montagu-Douglas-Scott, Lady Mary Cambridge, The Hon. Pamela Mountbatten, The Hon. Margaret Elphinstone, Lady Elizabeth Lambart and Diana Bowes-Lyon.

As for Philip's best man, he chose David Mountbatten, the Marquess of Milford Haven, while Prince William of Gloucester and Prince Michael of Kent would serve as page boys. In total, 2,000 guests were to be invited to the wedding ceremony, many of whom were heads of state, such as Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and the king of Iraq. Notably absent would be Philip's sisters as well as Elizabeth's uncle, the Duke of Windsor, who had caused a constitutional crisis just a decade earlier by abdicating the throne.

The king and queen held a grand ball at Buckingham Palace just two days before the wedding to celebrate their daughter's upcoming marriage. The usually reserved King George even led a conga line through all of the state rooms in the palace. On the morning of the wedding, Prince Philip was made Duke of Edinburgh, Earl of Merioneth and Baron Greenwich. The day before, King George had bestowed the title of 'His Royal Highness' on Philip, which meant that for a few hours, the prince had the unusual title of His Royal Highness Sir Philip Mountbatten.

Philip had spent the night before his wedding at Kensington Palace, and with hordes of photographers outside in the bitter cold waiting for him to emerge, Prince Philip arranged tea and coffee for them. Meanwhile, Elizabeth was getting ready at Buckingham Palace, even applying her own makeup for the wedding.

Elizabeth and Philip pictured in Malta following their marriage

## A royal honeymoon

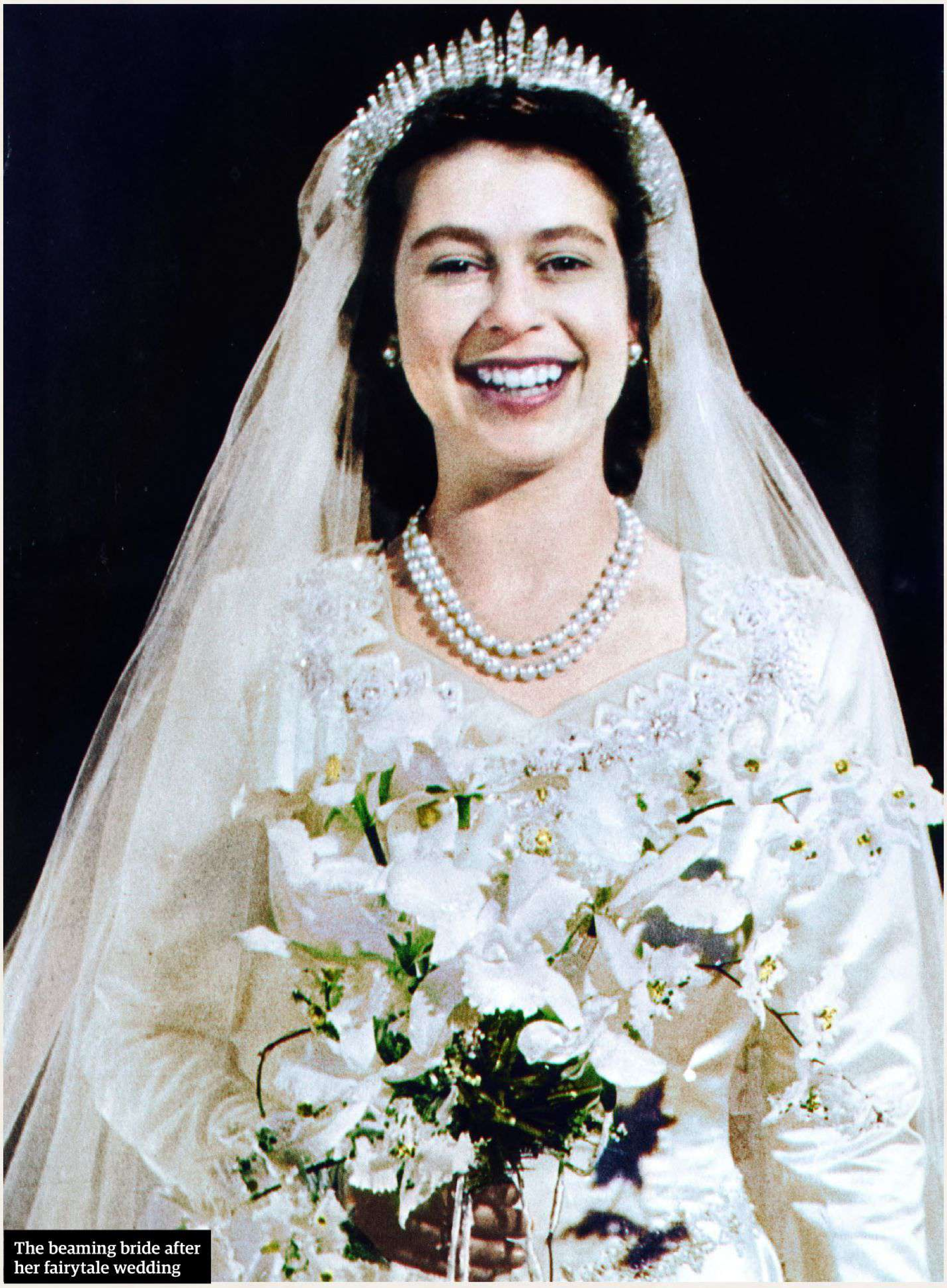
### How Elizabeth and Philip spent their first few days as newlyweds

As the bride emerged from Buckingham Palace to embark on her honeymoon, she wore a dress and velvet coat with a bonnet trimmed with ostrich feathers, designed by Norman Hartnell, in an appropriate shade of love-in-the-mist blue. The king and queen, along with Princess Alice, came out to wave the couple off.

Elizabeth and Philip were driven to Waterloo station in an open landau carriage so that the waiting crowds could see them – to ward off the cold, there were hot-water bottles of the floor of the carriage, along with Elizabeth's beloved corgi, Susan. As the carriage departed, the newlyweds were showered with rose petals rather than traditional confetti.

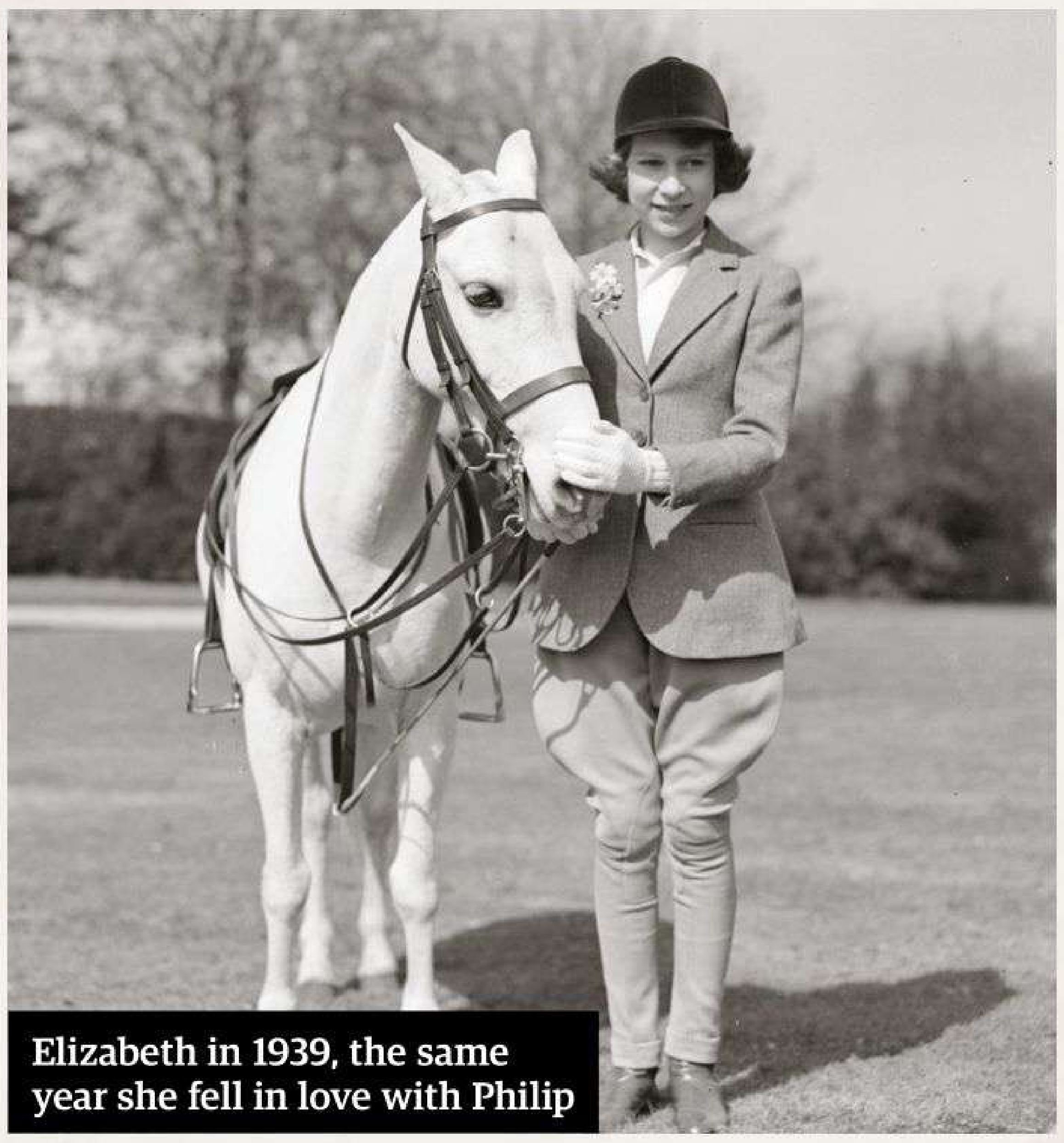
Elizabeth and Philip travelled to Broadlands in Hampshire, the home of Philip's uncle Earl Mountbatten, where they spent the first half of their honeymoon in an 18th century lodge – in 2007, the couple re-created their iconic honeymoon photo at Broadlands. Afterwards, they moved on to Birkhall Lodge, which was part of the Balmoral estate, to see out the rest of their honeymoon.

While they were away, Elizabeth and Philip released a statement expressing the gratitude they felt for all the well-wishes they had received. The princess also kept in touch with her family and lovingly informed her mother that Philip was "an angel".



The beaming bride after her fairytale wedding

Elizabeth and Philip are pictured here after announcing their engagement



Elizabeth in 1939, the same year she fell in love with Philip

The magnificent wedding cake

Just like any wedding day, not everything went as smoothly as the princess would have liked. Her delicate bridal bouquet, delivered that morning and made of white orchids and a sprig of myrtle, had gone missing. The myrtle had come from Osborne House, where Queen Victoria had planted a cutting that had been given to her by Prince Albert's grandmother. As panic set in, it turned out that a footman had placed the bride's bouquet in a cool room to keep it fresh and prevent it from wilting.

The bouquet was not the only unfortunate mishap of the morning. Elizabeth's mother had lent her the Queen Mary Fringe Tiara to be her something borrowed on her special day. As it was being placed on her head, disaster struck as the diamond tiara suddenly snapped. Standing by in case of an emergency was the court jeweller, who was rushed to his workroom by a police escort. Elizabeth waited anxiously and her mother quickly reassured her that the tiara would be fixed in time - and it was.

To top off the issues for the bride-to-be, the necklace that she supposed to wear, a double strand of pearls gifted to her by her parents, had been put on display at St James's Palace. To get them in time, Elizabeth's private secretary raced to the palace, borrowing the car of King Haakon VII of Norway to make it in time.

Despite the bumps along the way, the princess and the prince were finally ready for their wedding,

## The engagment ring

### Philip went to great lengths to design a ring fit for a queen

It was no secret that Philip was practically penniless, which was a huge obstacle when it came to creating the engagement ring of Elizabeth's dreams. Aware that her son wanted to propose to his beloved, Princess Alice gave him her tiara, which had been a gift from Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra. It was a sweet gesture, as Alice sacrificed her tiara to help Philip propose to the princess.

With the help of London-based jewellers Philip Antrobus Ltd, Philip used the diamonds from his mother's tiara to create a platinum and diamond engagement ring. The three-carat diamond solitaire is flanked by ten small diamonds, all set in platinum. While making her engagement ring, Philip also used other diamonds to make Elizabeth a beautiful bracelet as a wedding gift. Apparently, the prince wanted to design a ring that Elizabeth could wear with every outfit for every occasion, which was not a usual thing to consider at the time.

However, this was not the only wedding gift that Philip gave to Elizabeth. It is said that on the morning of the wedding, Philip decided to permanently quit smoking. His decision behind this was reportedly out of respect for his soon-to-be wife, who disliked smoking and was concerned about her father's habit, particularly as his health was steadily declining.

Elizabeth is always pictured wearing her beautiful engagement ring

Princess Elizabeth and her father arrive at Westminster Abbey

which was due to start at 11.30am. The royal parties arrived at the abbey in large carriage processions, past the thousands of onlookers who had lined the streets to get a glimpse of the royal bride. Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret were the first to arrive, followed by Dowager Queen Mary.

Prince Philip left Kensington Palace accompanied by his best man and entered the abbey through a door near Poet's Corner. Meanwhile, Elizabeth made her way inside the decadent Irish State Coach, with her father by her side, escorted by the Household Cavalry. As the coach approached the Abbey, the bells of St Margaret's Church rang out to announce the princess's arrival. Outside, the princess was joined by her large bridal party. As the radiant bride made her way inside Westminster Abbey, she must have been acutely aware that the entire ceremony was being recorded and broadcast by BBC radio to 200 million people. Waiting at the High Altar was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, who officiated the wedding.

At the High Altar there were large vases filled with white lilies, roses, pink carnations, camellia foliage, variegated ivy and chrysanthemums. Clement Attlee, the prime minister at the time, and other politicians were sat in the choir stalls with King George VI and Queen Elizabeth sat in the south side of the Sanctuary.

The organist and master of the choristers at the abbey, William Neil McKie, was the director for the music. The ceremony began with a fanfare specifically composed for the wedding by Arnold Bax, while McKie also composed a motet for the wedding, "We wait for thy loving kindness, O God." Sir Edward Cuthbert Bairstow sung a rendition of Psalm 67 and in total, there were 91 singers at the

The newlyweds waved to the crowds outside Buckingham Palace

> *"Elizabeth's dress was exhibited at St James's Palace before embarking on a tour"*

wedding with the combined choirs of Westminster Abbey, the Chapel Royal and St George's Chapel in Windsor.

The couple exchanged their vows. Elizabeth's wedding ring was made from a nugget of Welsh gold, which came from the Clogau St David's mine, near Dolgellau. The gold had been given as a gift to Queen Elizabeth to make her wedding ring and, eventually, the wedding rings of Princess Margaret, Princess Anne and Princess Diana were all made with it.

After the couple finished their vows, they moved into St Edward's Chapel behind the altar in order to sign their marriage register, accompanied by immediate members of their family. Once the register had been signed, the couple walked out of the Abbey to Felix Mendelssohn's classic *Wedding March*.

Following the wedding ceremony, the newlyweds left Westminster Abbey to return to Buckingham Palace. The wedding breakfast was held in the Ball-Supper Room at lunchtime, with a menu of "filet de sole Mountbatten, perdreau en casserole, and bombe glacée Princess Elizabeth". Princess Elizabeth, taking into account the post-war rationing of food, only had 150 guests attending the wedding breakfast.

While the guests tucked into their food, they enjoyed the music provided by the string band of the Grenadier Guards. The delicate wedding favours were made from individual posies of myrtle and white heather, from the royal estate of Balmoral in Scotland.

The stunning wedding cake was made by McVitie and Price. It was nine-feet tall, separated into four tiers, made from ingredients that had been sent from all over the world. Even the sugar that was used had been provided by the Girl Guides in Australia, and as the result the cake was nicknamed 'The 10,000 Mile Cake'. The cake was decorated with the arms of the bride and groom's families, monograms of the bride and groom, sugar-iced figures of their favourite activities and also decorations of regimental and naval badges. Elizabeth and Philip cut the cake with the sword that had been gifted to the groom by his new father-in-law.

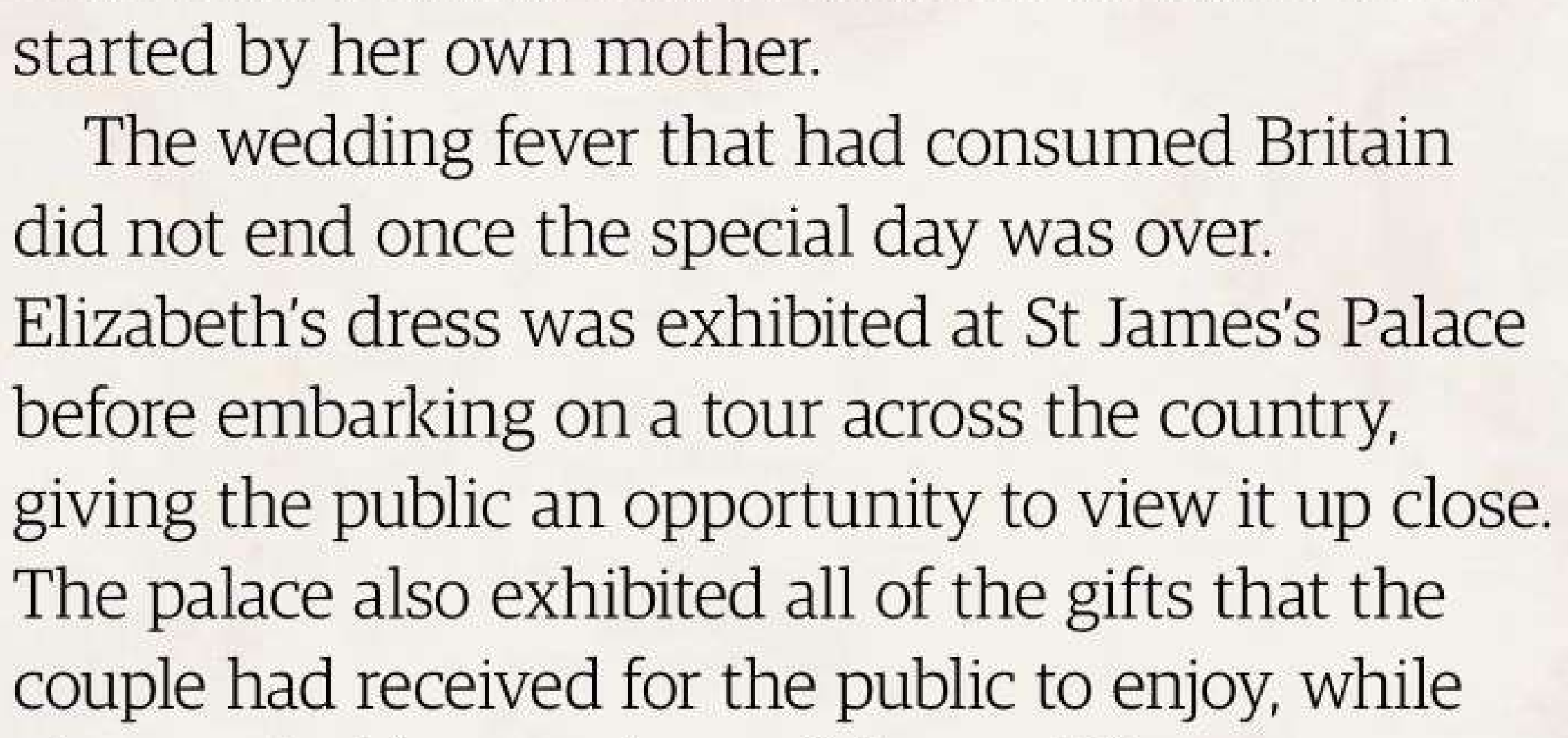
Although this was the official wedding cake, the couple had received 11 wedding cakes in total. In fact, they received over 2,500 gifts and 10,000 telegrams of congratulations from well-wishers – Mahatma Gandhi had even sent a piece of cotton lace that he spun himself, embroidered with the words 'Jai Hind' or 'Victory for India' in English.

To greet those who had gathered on the Mall, Elizabeth and Philip made their way onto the balcony and waved to the adoring crowds. The next day, Elizabeth's wedding bouquet was sent back to Westminster Abbey to be laid on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, a royal tradition that had been started by her own mother.

The wedding fever that had consumed Britain did not end once the special day was over. Elizabeth's dress was exhibited at St James's Palace before embarking on a tour across the country, giving the public an opportunity to view it up close. The palace also exhibited all of the gifts that the couple had received for the public to enjoy, while cinemas held screenings of the wedding ceremony across the country.

A couple of years into their marriage, Philip relinquished his beloved and promising naval career to support his wife, as she assumed more responsibility in the wake of her father's declining health, proving to all that he would be a reliable consort to Elizabeth.

In 2007, Elizabeth became the first British monarch to celebrate a diamond wedding anniversary and in 2017, the royal couple reached their platinum anniversary. Over 70 years have passed since their magical wedding that lifted the spirit of the nation, and Elizabeth and Philip have proven that love can, indeed, last a lifetime.



Crowds of people gathered outside of Buckingham Palace to see the bride and groom

© Getty; Thinkstock

## Princess Maria Pia & Alexander of Yugoslavia

*12 February 1955*

The wedding of Princess Maria Pia and Prince Alexander (photographed here upon their engagement with Maria Pia's father, Umberto II of Italy) was no small affair. 2,000 guests came, 100 of whom, including the duke of Kent and the king of Bulgaria, belonged to the royal families of Europe. The ceremony itself was held at the Nosso Senhora da Assunção Church at Cascais, 25 kilometres from Lisbon as Umberto was living in exile in the country.

© Alamy

18 April 1956

# Rainier III & Grace Kelly

## From Hollywood's girl next door to a princess, go inside the 20th century's most spectacular fairytale wedding

**Written by Philippa Grafton**

With her startling blue eyes and her shock of wavy blonde hair, Grace Kelly was the epitome of Hollywood glamour. Her innocent girl-next-door looks coupled with her extraordinary talent set her up for some of the industry's best roles, and in 1955 Grace took the starring role of lovestruck Princess Alexandra in *The Swan*, released in 1956. It was to be startlingly prophetic for what was to happen in her own life less than a year later. Ever the sweetheart of the silver screen, Grace was invited to the 1955 Cannes Film Festival in France as guest of honour. Exhausted and having recently moved apartments in New York, she was reluctant but dutifully accepted. Arriving in France, she contended with an all-consuming schedule, which included a visit to the Principality of Monaco on her first day. Here, the editor of *Paris Match* magazine had arranged a meeting at the royal palace between the star and Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

Calamity struck in the form of an electrical strike on the morning of Grace's intended visit to the palace. With a suitcase full of creased clothes and no means to style her hair, she opted for the least-wrinkled garment in her possession - a garish black rose-patterned dress - and twisted her hair into a chignon, decorating it with an array of artificial flowers to substitute the lack of a formal hat that was required for meeting royalty.

One of the most eligible bachelors of Europe's elite, Rainier was 32 with the Mediterranean looks and continental charms that proved irresistible to most women. But Grace's first impression of the prince was anything but favourable. Scheduled to meet at 3pm, Prince Rainier failed to show. For 45 minutes Grace was given a tour of the palace with the magazine's photographers before her patience ran out. Due to host a reception in Cannes at 5.30pm, she lamented the prince's rudeness and set out to leave. At that moment, Rainier arrived.

The prince gave her a tour of the palace's gardens and his own private zoo. Expected back in Cannes, the meeting was short but significant. Grace's elegance and shy dignity had won the prince over, while Rainier's air of power and self-assuredness overshadowed the actress's lamentable first impression.

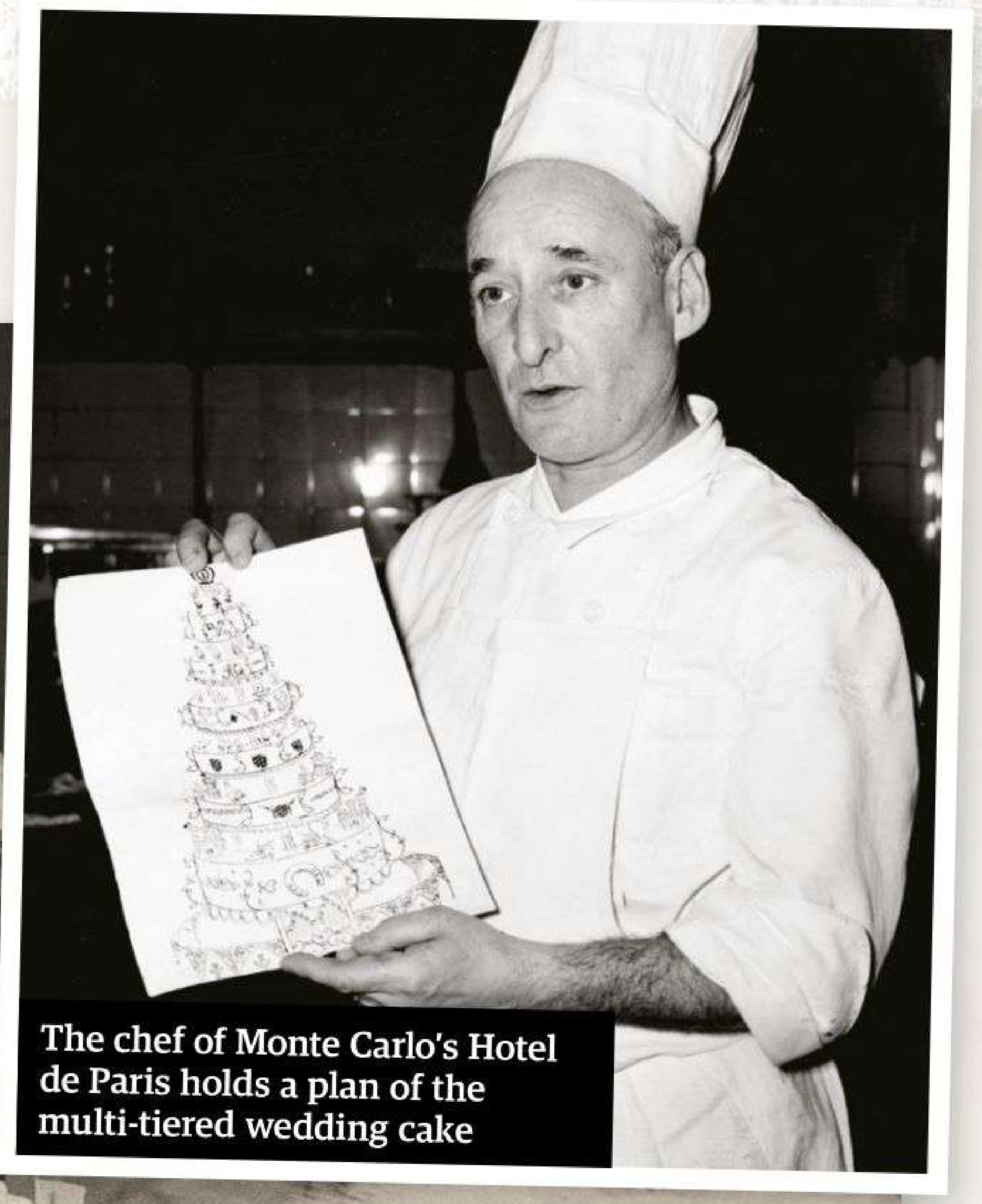
In secret, the two corresponded across the Atlantic, but it wasn't until Christmas of the same year that they saw each other again. While in the US, Prince Rainier and his entourage visited Grace at her family home in Philadelphia during a Christmas Eve celebration. The pair spent time together each day and their romance quickly turned into an engagement, with the official announcement made on the 5 January 1956.

With the brief courtship over, the couple turned their sights towards the future and their impending wedding. Set for April 1956, it wasn't far away, and there was plenty that the couple had to take care of. For Grace, the shadow looming over her future marriage with Prince Rainier was her acting career.

In a media interview, Grace deferred the question of her career to her husband, who remarked that she would stop. But stepping out of Hollywood wasn't so straightforward - Grace went to visit Metro Goldwyn Meyer, the company to which she was contracted, to let them know that she

The official wedding portrait of Rainier and Grace following the religious ceremony

The wedding reception was held in the Prince's Palace of Monaco



The chef of Monte Carlo's Hotel de Paris holds a plan of the multi-tiered wedding cake

The first meeting between Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier

> “Grace deferred the question of her career to her husband”

wouldn't be able to fulfil her contract. They agreed to end it early under one condition - that they were given the exclusive rights to film the entire wedding. Grace agreed, tragically unaware of the media frenzy that would soon engulf her marriage to Rainier.

On 4 April, Grace set sail for Monaco aboard the SS Constitution, having travelled with her family, a select few journalists and her trusty poodle, Oliver. Tucked away beneath the deck were over 60 pieces of luggage, including a steel box that housed the most precious garment of all: the wedding dress. Bidding her adieu were crowds in their thousands; reporters jostled with fans to see off the film star on her voyage to become a European princess.

Eight days later, she arrived in Monaco, where Rainier sailed out to greet his bride on the yacht Deo Juvante II. Having left behind the great crowds of New York, Grace came face to face with thousands on the shores of Monaco, welcoming her to her new home.

## The engagement

### How a brief courtship became something more

On 24 December 1955, Prince Rainier of Monaco visited Grace and her family at their home in Philadelphia. Here, he spent time with the family during a Christmas Eve party, but the besotted pair had no chance to be alone together. Yet Grace's eldest sister, Peggy, noticed the couple's chemistry and suggested that the prince and his entourage stay at her home nearby. The prince duly accepted and Grace followed suit, playing cards with Rainier into the early hours. On Christmas Day, Grace spent some alone time with Rainier on a drive, returning later with a diamond and ruby-studded gold ring on her finger – a friendship ring gifted from Rainier.

Three days later, Grace returned to New York to begin her singing lessons for her role in *High Society*. The pair saw each other daily, and on 29 December the prince proposed. The official proposal was sent to Grace's father, Jack Kelly, and on New Year's Eve, the couple were officially engaged. It wasn't until 5 January 1956 that it was announced to the public.

When the prince saw the jewels that other Hollywood actresses were toting, he was determined to outshine them all. The friendship ring he had given to Grace in December simply wouldn't cut it – he had a 10.47-carat emerald-cut diamond set in a platinum band with two supporting baguette diamonds created by Cartier. This exquisite ring can be seen in *High Society*, worn as her character's engagement ring, too.

Grace Kelly shows her engagement ring from Prince Ranier to her parents

The engagement ring can be seen in scenes of her last film

Over the week between her arrival in her new country and the wedding ceremonies, Grace and Prince Rainier were sent from one party to another, a whirlwind of celebration that never seemed to end. Among the festivities were firework displays and ballet performances. It was an exhausting week; reporters and photographers, all looking for a scandal or breaking story to cement their own careers, constantly hounded the couple. The media hysteria was overwhelming and, in the absence of any true story to print, journalists took to salacious rumour-mongering. For the couple, the wedding and an end to the nightmare media attention it was garnering couldn't come soon enough.

On the morning of 18 April, they attended the civil ceremony, the first half of their official wedding according to Monégasque law. Held in the royal palace's diminutive throne room, the couple said their vows in front of a small audience of just 80 guests.

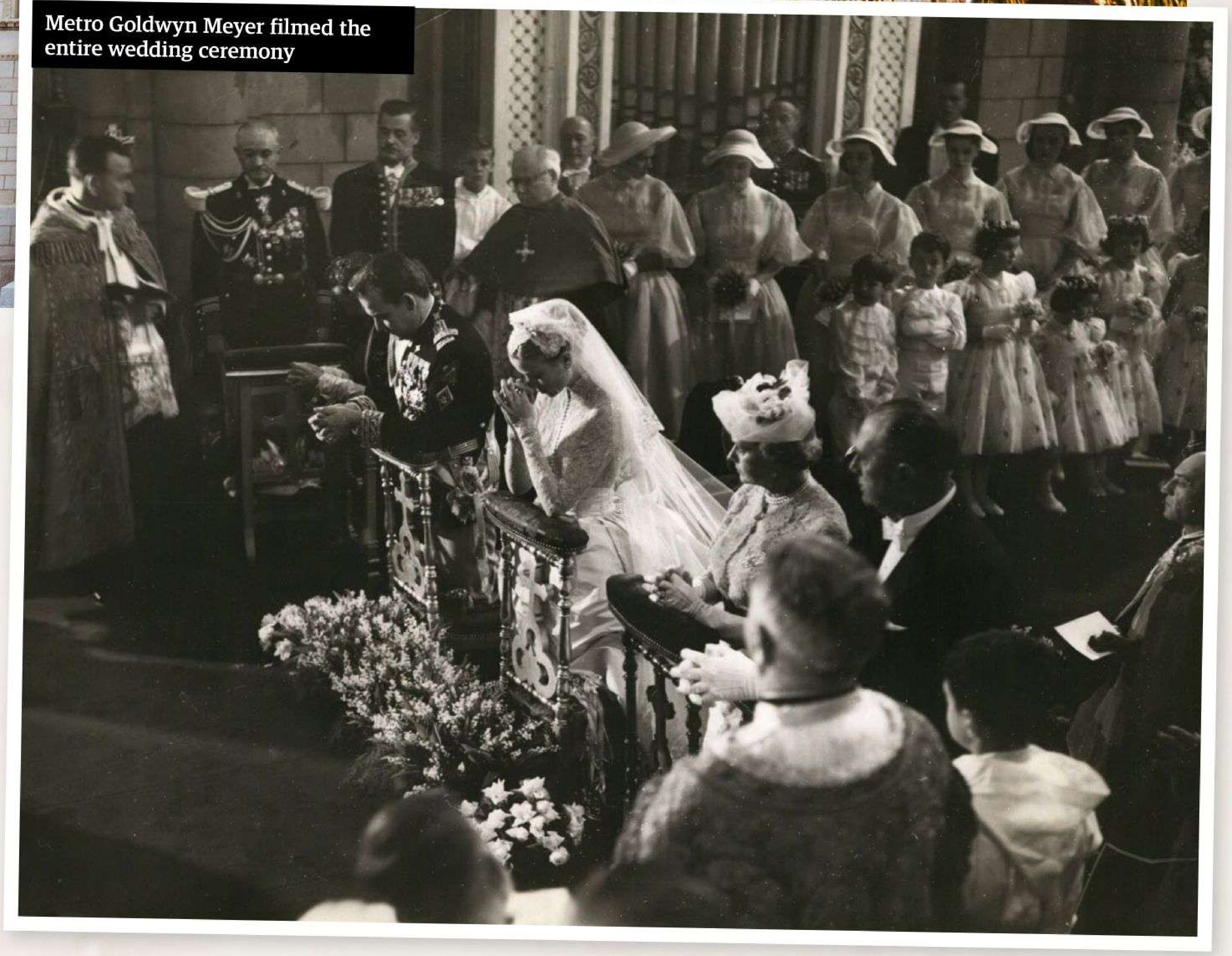
In keeping with the modest ceremony, Grace wore a simple but elegant dress designed by MGM's costume designer Helen Rose, made of rose-coloured taffeta and covered with Alçenon lace. The simple dress was accessorised with white gloves and a Juliet cap, while Rainier wore a black morning coat.

The wedding would continue the next day, but not before Prince Rainier and Grace hosted a reception in the palace courtyard for 3,000 of Monaco's citizens. Here, Monégasques were kept fed and watered with appetisers and champagne and shook hands with the half-married couple. Technically not wed, the couple retired to separate rooms, with Grace staying in the palace while Rainier went back to his villa.

The next morning was the final part of the wedding ceremony. Held at the Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Monaco, it should've provided the pair with some welcome respite from the media frenzy, but MGM's cameras and lights were set up inside, ready to film the wedding of the century; even in the most intimate part of their wedding, they couldn't escape the world's ever-watching eyes.

The scene was set for a fairytale wedding. A sea of white flowers – lilies, white lilacs and snapdragons – cascaded across the cathedral, hanging in baskets and fixed to chandeliers,

Saint Nicholas Cathedral, where the couple were married



Metro Goldwyn Meyer filmed the entire wedding ceremony

while the high altar was surrounded by flickering candles. Seated in the crowd were some of Hollywood's most celebrated stars, including Cary Grant, Gloria Swanson and Ava Gardner. With all the guests seated, it was time for the bride to arrive first, as Monégasque tradition dictated.

On the arm of her father, Grace walked past guards of honour from the visiting warships of Britain, France, Italy and America and into the cathedral. Walking down the aisle between candles and flowers, Grace was the embodiment of a fairytale princess, with the soft flickering light of the candles capturing the intricate details of lacing and pearl on her exquisite gown.

Just moments after Grace took her place at the altar, a trumpet blare signalled the arrival of Prince Rainier in a uniform of his own design, based on the uniforms of Napoleon Bonaparte. As he joined Grace at the altar, the two momentarily locked eyes, the prince smiling nervously at his bride-to-be, while Grace remained tense and tight-lipped.

With the nuptial Mass conducted in French by the Bishop of Monaco, the couple reiterated their vows and exchanged rings before kneeling to receive communion. The religious ceremony signified the end of Grace Kelly – as the couple stepped out of the cathedral, the world was presented with the prince and his new wife, Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco.

With the ceremonies complete, the couple were taken on a driving tour of Monte Carlo in a black and cream Rolls-Royce, gifted to them by the people of Monaco. Later, they retired for a private function with the 600 attendees of the religious service. Guests were fed a luncheon of soup, smoked salmon, caviar, lobster and salad, all washed down with champagne.

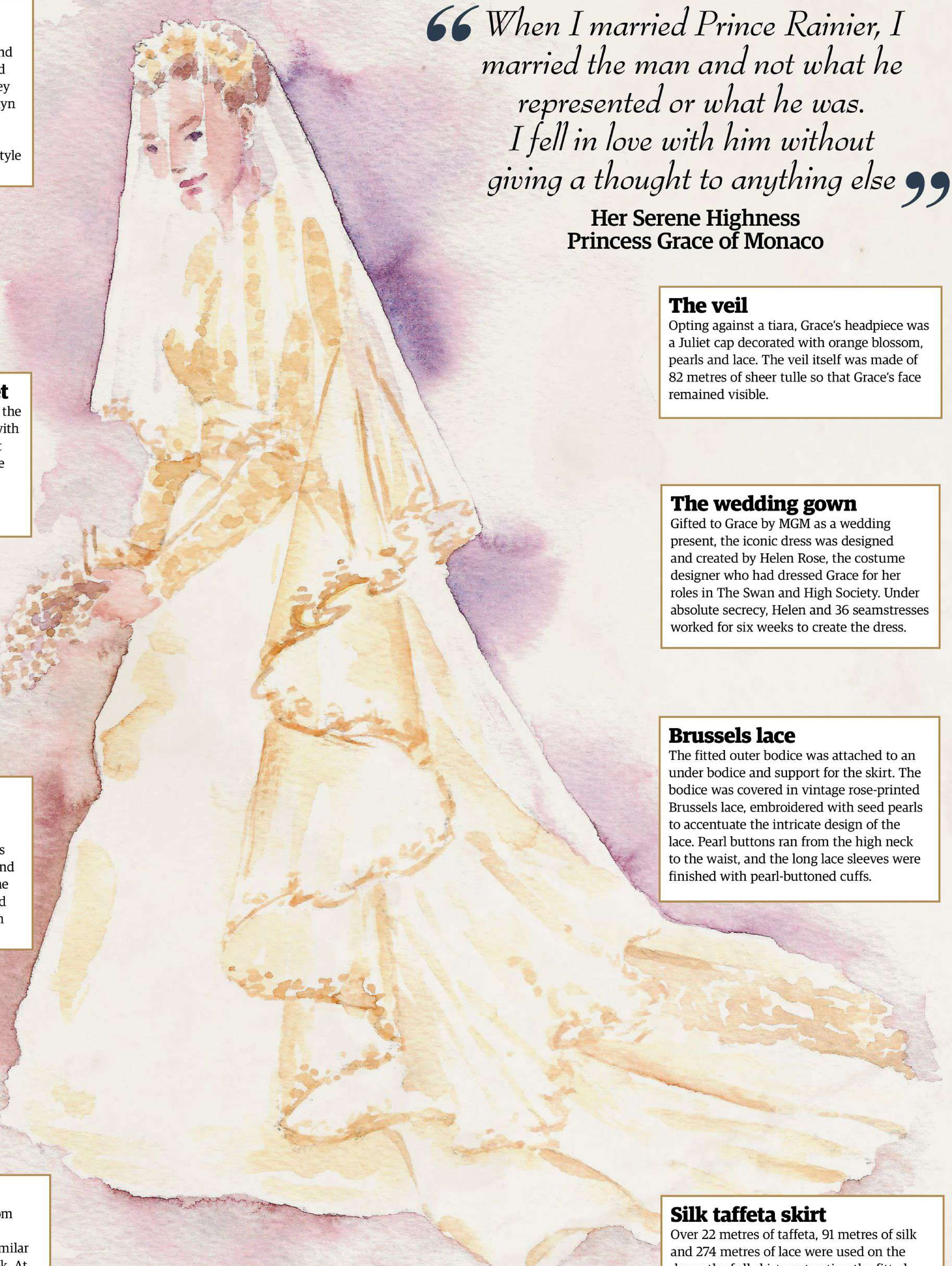
The incredible six-tier wedding cake was also unveiled here, featuring a sugar replica of the palace, with each tier depicting a different scene from the history of Monaco, topped with a spun sugar crown. The extraordinary cake was cut by the royal couple using Rainier's ceremonial sword.

Finally, the stress of the world's most anticipated wedding was over; the couple could finally relax. Later, the prince remarked on how the dignity of the wedding was compromised by the intrusion of the press in the ceremony: "We both agreed that we should really have got married in a little chapel in the mountains."

The wedding was finally over, all the strain and anxiety that went along with it a distant nightmare. But Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco faced a new, rather more complex challenge – winning over the Monégasque population.

# Rainier III & Grace Kelly

> “When I married Prince Rainier, I married the man and not what he represented or what he was. I fell in love with him without giving a thought to anything else”
>
> **Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco**



**Styled hair**
Grace’s blonde locks were pulled away from her face and held under her veil. She used celebrated hairdresser Sydney Guilaroff – favourite of Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Debbie Reynolds and Ava Gardner among others – to style her wedding hair.

**Wedding bouquet**
The bouquet featured lily of the valley flowers intertwined with ribbons. The bride’s bouquet was left on the altar after the ceremony. Her bridesmaids carried tea roses, while the flower girls held daisies.

**Prayer book**
In her hands, Grace carried Brides Manual: A Manual of Catholic Devotions with Mass for the Marriage Ceremony and the Nuptial Blessing down the aisle. The book was decorated with pearls and lace to match the wedding gown.

**Shoes**
Designed by David Evins from Evins of New York, the six-centimetre heels featured similar decoration to the prayer book. At Grace’s request, a copper coin was built into the sole of the right shoe for good luck.

**The veil**
Opting against a tiara, Grace’s headpiece was a Juliet cap decorated with orange blossom, pearls and lace. The veil itself was made of 82 metres of sheer tulle so that Grace’s face remained visible.

**The wedding gown**
Gifted to Grace by MGM as a wedding present, the iconic dress was designed and created by Helen Rose, the costume designer who had dressed Grace for her roles in The Swan and High Society. Under absolute secrecy, Helen and 36 seamstresses worked for six weeks to create the dress.

**Brussels lace**
The fitted outer bodice was attached to an under bodice and support for the skirt. The bodice was covered in vintage rose-printed Brussels lace, embroidered with seed pearls to accentuate the intricate design of the lace. Pearl buttons ran from the high neck to the waist, and the long lace sleeves were finished with pearl-buttoned cuffs.

**Silk taffeta skirt**
Over 22 metres of taffeta, 91 metres of silk and 274 metres of lace were used on the dress, the full skirt contrasting the fitted bodice in its sheer simplicity. The petticoats underneath the skirt featured small blue satin bows.

© Alamy, FreePik, Getty, TopFoto

## Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands & Claus von Amsberg

*10 March 1966*

According to the Dutch people, the future Queen Beatrix could not have chosen a worse husband. While the wounds from World War II still ran deep, Claus von Amsberg was a German and had been a member of Hitler Youth to boot. But that didn't stop them. On 10 March 1966 they had two services – a civil ceremony at Amsterdam Town Hall followed by a religious one at the Westerkerk.

© Getty

Charles and Diana's wedding was a fairytale extravaganza, but their public smiles and happiness masked secret tensions and concerns about the marriage's future

### 29 July 1981

# Prince Charles & Diana Spencer

The wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer was hailed as a real-life fairytale… but behind the scenes, things were already looking rather less than rosy

**Written by Melanie Clegg**

When Prince Charles, eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II, celebrated his 30th birthday in November 1978, speculation about who would be his future wife quickly intensified. Dubbed the 'Playboy Prince' by the press, Charles had had several girlfriends over the years, some deemed more suitable than others, but as far as anyone outside his close circle of friends and family knew he had not seriously considered marrying any of them – although he had unsuccessfully proposed at least once, to Lady Amanda Knatchbull, the granddaughter of his great uncle and mentor, Lord Mountbatten. In 1977 he was briefly involved in a relationship with Lady Sarah Spencer, the vivacious eldest daughter of Earl Spencer, but it quickly fell apart when Lady Sarah spoke to the press about him. However, before their relationship went awry, Charles was invited to a shoot at Althorp, the country seat of the Spencer family, and it was there that he met Sarah's youngest sister, Lady Diana, who was just 16 years old and still at boarding school. Charles was intrigued by Diana's adolescent gaiety and high spirits and, after partnering her in a dance at the ball held at Althorp that evening, asked her to show him the Spencer family's famous picture gallery – only for Lady Sarah to unceremoniously intervene. Charles quickly forgot the youngest Spencer girl, but Diana was infatuated and could talk of nothing else but the Prince for quite some time to come, even covering her bedroom walls with pictures of him.

Charles and Diana would not meet again until November 1978, when he invited her to his 30th birthday party. However, another 18 months would pass before they started to become romantically involved, when Diana was invited to attend a house party at Petworth in July 1980, allegedly at the instigation of Camilla Parker-Bowles, a married woman with whom Charles had been having an on/off relationship for several years. According to Diana, Charles 'leapt' on her after she told him how sad she had felt for him when she watched him walking in the procession at Lord Mountbatten's funeral in autumn 1979. It seemed to her, she told him, that he needed someone to look after him and Charles, who had come to rather the same conclusion, could not help but respond to her sympathy. Shortly afterwards, Charles invited Diana to join him on the Royal Yacht Britannia for the annual Cowes sailing week in August – although this was far from being a romantic interlude, for she was part of a sizeable party and had her own cabin for the event. Indeed, Diana's virginal inexperience and previously very uneventful love life – which had gone no further than being chastely squired to society balls by old Etonians that she had known all her life – was considered to be very much in her favour.

Things moved very quickly after this. Diana was invited up to Balmoral a month later, which was taken as a strong sign that Charles was seriously interested in her. Meeting the Queen and the rest of the royal family on such an intimate level would be an extremely daunting for most young women, especially one as shy and awkward as Diana was at that point, but she had known them all of her life thanks to her family's close relationship with them. In fact, Diana had been born in Park House on the

Sandringham estate (her family lived there before her father inherited the Spencer earldom), while her formidable grandmother, Lady Fermoy, was one of the Queen Mother's closest friends.

Although she would later claim to have disapproved of the match, it seems likely that Lady Fermoy was actually very much in favour of it and was responsible for Diana's next invitation to visit the royal family at Balmoral, this time staying with the Queen Mother at her private estate, Birkhall. Prince Charles was extremely close to his grandmother and, knowing that she was very keen that he should marry as soon as possible, was clearly hoping that she would approve of Diana. Luckily the visit went well, with Diana charming everyone with her good nature, prettiness and high spirits, and Charles took the next step of asking her to accompany him on a visit to Highgrove, the country house that he had recently purchased in Gloucestershire. Diana, who was used to the splendours of Althorp, found it a bit unimpressive and would have been even less thrilled if she had known that its primary attraction for Charles was its close proximity to Camilla Parker-Bowles' country house.

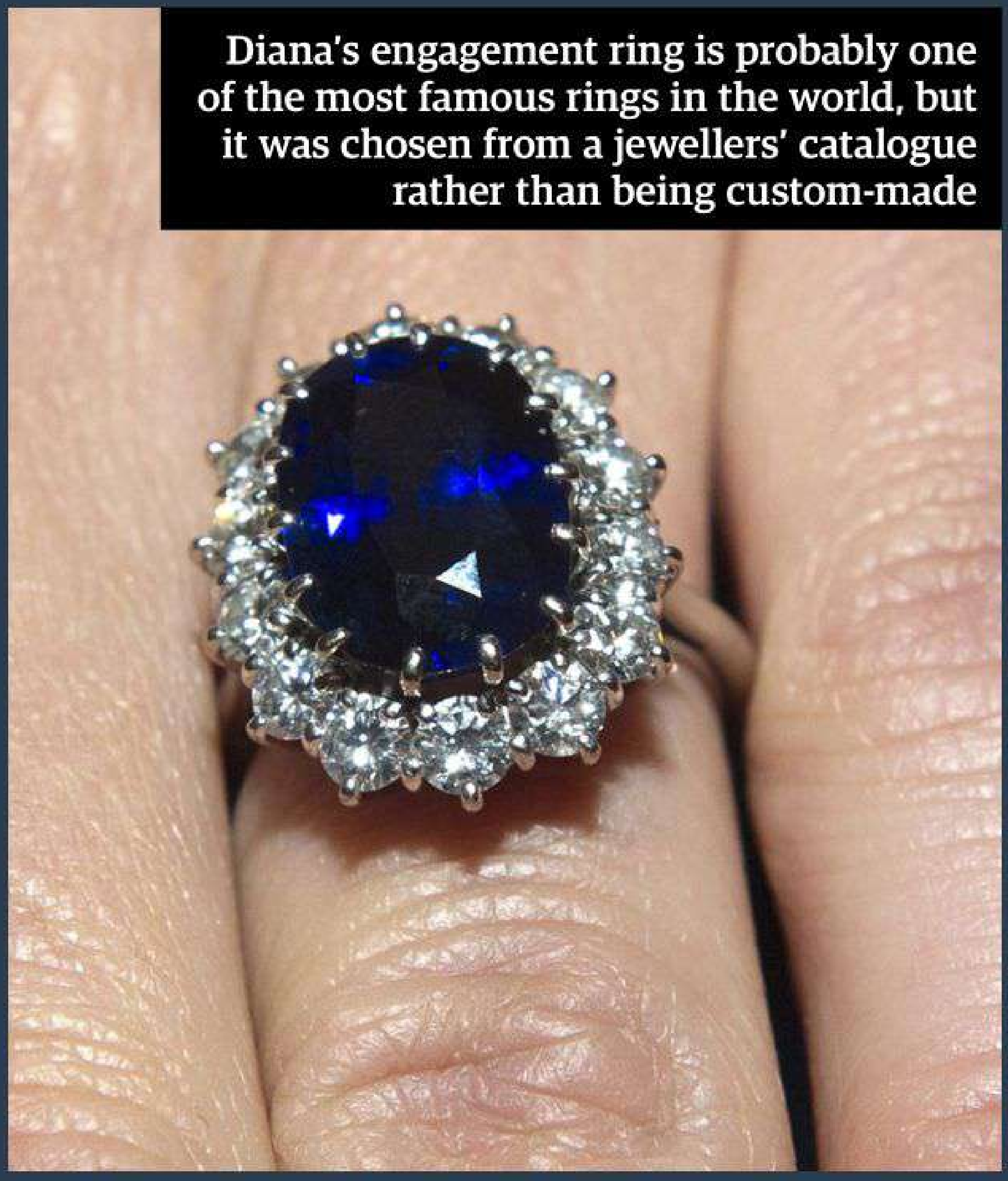
Although Diana would later claim that she only met Charles 13 times before they became engaged, in reality they saw rather more of each other, with several meetings in London as well as trips to Balmoral, Highgrove and Sandringham, where she was a guest at a small royal gathering for Charles's 32nd birthday in November 1980. It was at around this time that news of their relationship broke in the press and Diana began to be hounded by photographers, who followed her wherever she went, while the newspapers were rife with speculation that an engagement was imminent. In the end, the much-expected proposal took place on 3 February 1981 at Windsor Castle, with Diana allegedly being so overwhelmed that she thought Charles was joking and burst out laughing before saying yes. When she then told him that she loved him, he replied "Whatever love is", which didn't exactly bode well for their future happiness. News of the engagement was greeted with mingled happiness and relief by the royal family but was kept secret for a few more weeks while Diana spent some time alone with her mother in Australia. Later she would ruefully recall that this was the "last time I walked alone".

The royal engagement was officially announced on 24 February and the world was treated to an awkward interview with the couple in which Diana looked obviously besotted with her prince while he, once again, threw a damper on proceedings by replying "Whatever 'in love' means" when asked if they were in love. That evening, Diana moved into Clarence House, the London home of the Queen Mother, as it was obvious that her flat in Chelsea, which she shared with a group of close female friends, was no longer suitable. After dinner that evening she went into the staff quarters, where

## An iconic engagement ring

### Diana's beautiful sapphire and diamond engagement ring raised eyebrows in royal circles

Prince Charles did not come prepared with a ring when he proposed to Lady Diana Spencer in February 1981, but instead she was invited to choose her own ring from a selection at the royal jewellers, Garrard. Unusually for a royal engagement ring, it was not custom-made for her but was picked from their current stock, which raised a few eyebrows. Featuring 14 solitaire diamonds surrounding a 12-carat blue Ceylon sapphire set in 18-carat white gold, it cost £28,000, which is roughly equivalent to £98,000 now, although its current value is more like £300,000. Diana would always be very fond of sapphires and apparently chose this particular ring because of its enormous size, although she may also have been influenced by the fact that the design was allegedly inspired by the very similar diamond and sapphire brooch that Prince Albert presented to Queen Victoria as a wedding gift in 1841. After Diana's death, the ring was inherited by Prince Harry but he passed it on to his older brother, William, so that he could give it to Catherine Middleton when they became engaged in 2010, believing that using his late mother's ring was a way of involving her in his engagement.



Diana's engagement ring is probably one of the most famous rings in the world, but it was chosen from a jewellers' catalogue rather than being custom-made

Despite all the tension and drama that had dogged the months before their wedding, Charles and Diana could not have looked happier as they made their way back to Buckingham Palace after the ceremony

**Charles and Diana's balcony kiss after the ceremony is one of the most enduring images from the 1981 royal wedding**

she proceeded to ride a bicycle around a room chanting "I'm going to marry the Prince of Wales", much to the staff's amusement. Two days later she moved up the road to Buckingham Palace, where she was given a small and rather claustrophobic suite of rooms on the nursery floor. After spending a number of years sharing the flat her father had bought her with her friends, and being free to come and go as she pleased, this was a depressing experience for Diana, who quickly began to feel bored, lonely and isolated. She spent most of her time alone, as Charles was often away and his family paid her very little attention, assuming that she would quickly adapt to their ways and not realising that she was in desperate need of guidance and support.

Desperate for company, she began to spend time with the palace staff, even holding a small party for them on her 20th birthday, which was a few weeks before her wedding day. While Diana was sequestered in Buckingham Palace, excitement about her forthcoming wedding was reaching fever pitch outside, with souvenirs doing a roaring trade and street parties planned all across the country. There was also a great deal of speculation about Diana's wedding dress, which was being made by a young designer couple, David and Elizabeth Emanuel. It required several fittings and adjustments due to Diana's dramatic weight loss during the months before her wedding as she grappled with the pressures of her new position and her growing unease about the close relationship between her fiancé and Camilla Parker-Bowles. When she found out that Charles was planning a private farewell lunch with Mrs Parker-Bowles two days before the wedding, Diana broke down and even threatened to call off the wedding, only for one of her sisters to point out that it was far too late to pull out as "your face is on the tea towels".

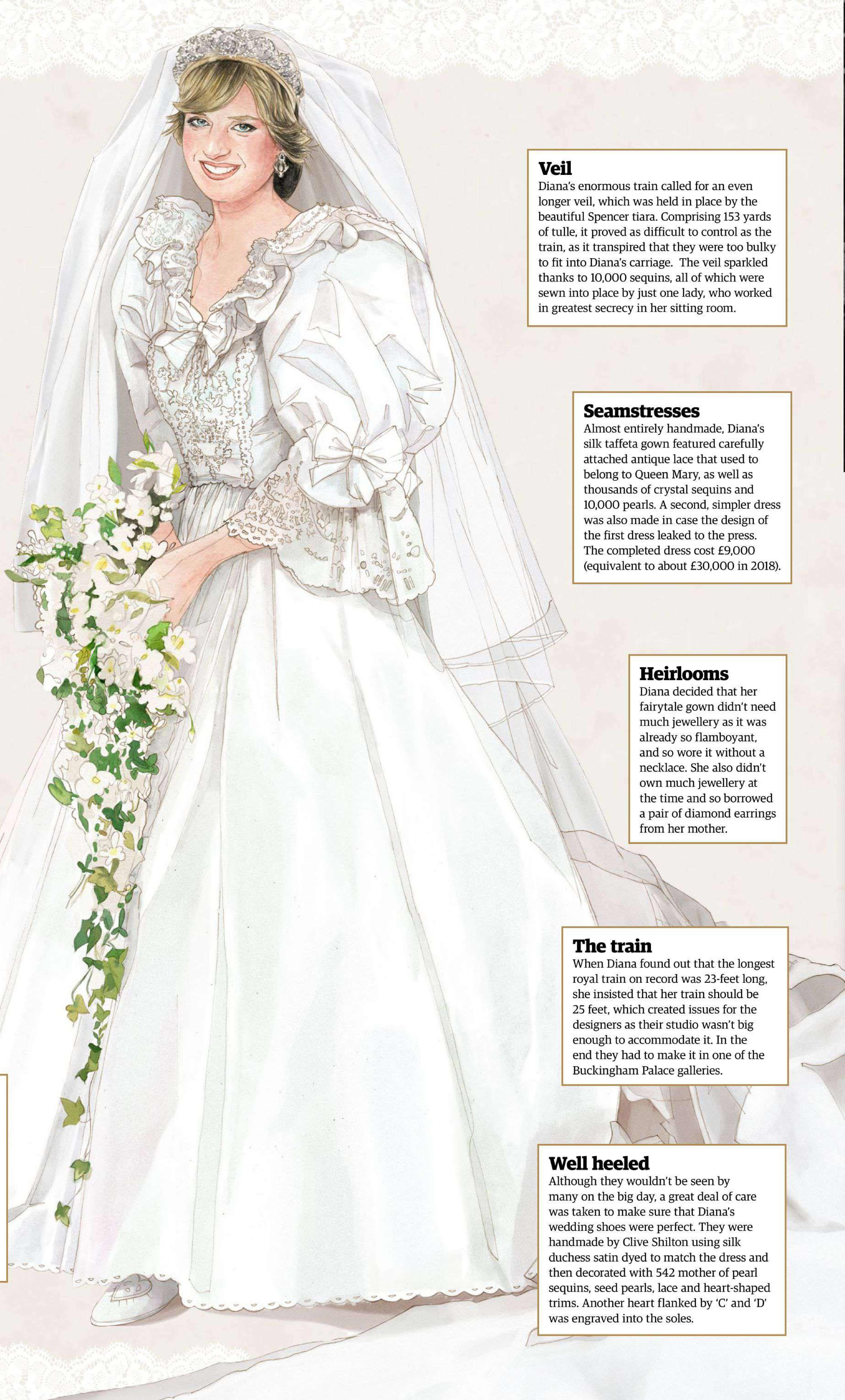
The wedding celebrations began two days before the big day with a final rehearsal in St Paul's Cathedral, which had been chosen as the wedding venue thanks to its enormous size and central location, and then a huge ball held by the Queen in Buckingham Palace, which Diana attended in a daring shocking pink, skin-tight Emanuel gown. Diana spent the night before her wedding at Clarence House with her sisters and bridal attendants, all of whom had to work hard to calm her nerves as she mentally prepared for the biggest day of her life. Prince Charles sent a gift of a signet ring across from Buckingham Palace, accompanied by a note telling her that "I am so proud of you and when you come up I'll be there at the altar for you tomorrow. Just look 'em in the eye and knock them dead." The following morning, 750 million people watched live on television as Diana,

**Although most of the official wedding photos were extremely formal, as was traditional at the time, the couple allowed themselves to have some fun with their photographer, Lord Lichfield**

> "Diana threatened to call the wedding off but her sister pointed out that it was too late – her face was 'on the tea towels'"

# The fairytale dress

The secrets hidden in the seams of Diana's wedding dress



**Secret design**

Diana chose David and Elizabeth Emanuel to design her wedding dress, which was created in the greatest secrecy. The Emanuels even blacked out their windows to prevent anyone catching a glimpse. Fittings for the dress were complicated by the fact that Diana lost five inches from her waist before the wedding, which meant that it had to be adapted several times and she had to be sewn into it.

**Veil**

Diana's enormous train called for an even longer veil, which was held in place by the beautiful Spencer tiara. Comprising 153 yards of tulle, it proved as difficult to control as the train, as it transpired that they were too bulky to fit into Diana's carriage. The veil sparkled thanks to 10,000 sequins, all of which were sewn into place by just one lady, who worked in greatest secrecy in her sitting room.

**Seamstresses**

Almost entirely handmade, Diana's silk taffeta gown featured carefully attached antique lace that used to belong to Queen Mary, as well as thousands of crystal sequins and 10,000 pearls. A second, simpler dress was also made in case the design of the first dress leaked to the press. The completed dress cost £9,000 (equivalent to about £30,000 in 2018).

**Flowers**

A traditional small bridal posy would not do as it would be dwarfed by her gown. Instead, the florist Longmans created three identical sweeping bouquets that incorporated blooms from all around the country, including – by special request of Prince Charles – the yellow 'Mountbatten' rose as well as the traditional sprig of myrtle.

**Heirlooms**

Diana decided that her fairytale gown didn't need much jewellery as it was already so flamboyant, and so wore it without a necklace. She also didn't own much jewellery at the time and so borrowed a pair of diamond earrings from her mother.

**The train**

When Diana found out that the longest royal train on record was 23-feet long, she insisted that her train should be 25 feet, which created issues for the designers as their studio wasn't big enough to accommodate it. In the end they had to make it in one of the Buckingham Palace galleries.

**Something borrowed**

Diana's 'something old' was antique lace that had belonged to her husband's great grandmother, Queen Mary; her 'something new' was her wedding ensemble; her 'something borrowed' was the Spencer tiara; and the all-important 'something blue' was a tiny ribbon bow sewn into the waistband, along with a tiny horseshoe of 18-carat yellow gold studded with diamonds.

**Well heeled**

Although they wouldn't be seen by many on the big day, a great deal of care was taken to make sure that Diana's wedding shoes were perfect. They were handmade by Clive Shilton using silk duchess satin dyed to match the dress and then decorated with 542 mother of pearl sequins, seed pearls, lace and heart-shaped trims. Another heart flanked by 'C' and 'D' was engraved into the soles.

## Prince Charles & Diana Spencer

accompanied by her father Earl Spencer, rode in the famous royal glass coach to St Paul's Cathedral, cheered on by the vast crowds – estimated to be around 650,000 people – that lined the route from Clarence House. There was a loud gasp as she emerged from the carriage and her ivory silk taffeta wedding dress – the subject of months of speculation – was revealed for the first time, sadly crumpled after its long journey squashed into the coach but still beautiful and entirely fitting for a wedding that was being hailed by the public as a real-life fairytale.

The Spencer tiara, a family heirloom that Diana had borrowed for the event, sparkled under the cathedral lights as she made her way slowly up the aisle, past the 3,500 invited guests, her 25-foot train carried behind her by her two youngest bridesmaids. Later on, Diana would recall feeling like "the luckiest girl in the world" to be marrying a man whom she loved so much and that when Charles whispered, "You look beautiful" to her when she reached his side at the altar, she replied, "Beautiful for you." The couple were married by the Archbishop of Canterbury and although Diana looked extremely poised, she betrayed her nervousness when she got Charles's name wrong during the vows. After the ceremony, the couple returned by carriage to Buckingham Palace, where they posed for the official photographs, which were taken by the Queen's cousin, Lord Lichfield, and enjoyed a lavish wedding breakfast of brill in lobster sauce followed by chicken stuffed with lamb mousse, with strawberries and cream for pudding. There were also no fewer than 27 wedding cakes, including the five-foot-tall official cake, which the couple cut after the ceremony.

For the crowds outside, the next glimpse of the newly married royal couple occurred shortly afterwards when Charles and Diana made the traditional appearance on the Buckingham Palace balcony, flanked by their family and members of the wedding party. Charles had not sealed his wedding vows with a kiss but made up for this oversight by kissing Diana now, creating an iconic image that would feature on dozens of newspapers all around the globe the following day. According to royal tradition, now a thing of the past, the couple did not stay for the evening party, which was to take place at Claridges, but instead changed into their going-away outfits – in Diana's case, a pretty peach Bellville Sassoon suit with matching hat – then bid their guests goodbye before climbing into the open landau that would take them to Waterloo Station. The groom's mischievous younger brothers, Andrew and Edward, had secretly attached balloons, tin cans and a 'Just Married' sign to the back of the carriage. This delighted the crowds that had gathered to watch the newlyweds leave for their honeymoon, which would involve a few days at Broadlands, Lord Mountbatten's former country home, followed by a Mediterranean cruise on the Royal Yacht Britannia and then several weeks alone on the Balmoral estate. By the time they returned from honeymoon, Diana's position as an international celebrity, on a scale that had almost certainly never been seen before, had been assured, thanks in part to the romantic magnificence of her wedding day. That the newly married Prince and Princess of Wales's smiles and happiness masked her secret despair and his growing sense of unease that he had made a terrible mistake in marrying a woman that he did not love with all of his heart would not become apparent, to the public at least, for quite some time to come.

> "Diana was so nervous that she got Charles's name wrong during the vows"

While their guests decamped to Claridges for a party, the newly weds headed off on honeymoon – trailed by the balloons attached to their carriage by Charles's brothers

© Getty Images; Illustration by Julia Lillo

## Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece & Marie-Chantal Miller

*1 July 1995*

As the Sun beat down, Pavlos and Marie-Chantal were wed at St Sophia's Cathedral, a Greek Orthodox church in London. Despite the fact that Greece's monarchy had been abolished, it was every inch a royal affair. Marie-Chantal wore a pearl-encrusted ivory silk Valentino gown that took 25 seamstresses four months to make, accompanied by a four-metre Chantilly lace train. The reception was even in the illustrious Hampton Court Palace.

© Getty

29 April 2011

# Prince William & Catherine Middleton

It was the royal wedding that the world had been waiting for as the second in line to the throne married the love of his life - and everyone got to watch

**Written by Katharine Marsh**

It may have been the royal wedding of the 21st century, but it all began at university. In 2001, Prince William called St Salvator's Hall home at the University of St Andrews. Just a few rooms away was the woman who would help shape the rest of his life: Catherine. As coursemates and housemates, their friendship blossomed throughout their first year, and Catherine became a calming influence. She was even credited with convincing him to stay at the end of their first year when he began having doubts.

However, it quickly turned into something more for William. But it wouldn't be that easy for him - Catherine was in a relationship and just wasn't interested. But there was good news for the prince early in 2003 when Catherine split from her boyfriend. Could he win over his housemate? In 2004, it was confirmed by a single picture taken at Klosters, a Swiss ski resort: William and Catherine were together. With the news breaking, what the world didn't know was that they had been seeing each other since Christmas.

Following their graduation, the real world awaited them. While William embarked on his first round of military training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Catherine began work as a party planner at Party Pieces, the company owned by her parents, Michael and Carole Middleton. The relationship was long-distance - William couldn't leave Sandhurst during his training and Catherine was busy in London - but they made it work.

In 2006, they made their first appearance together at a wedding. Although Catherine hadn't attended Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles' wedding with William, they were both present at the ceremony of Camilla's daughter. Avid royal watchers saw Catherine's appearance as a sign that she was preparing to be a permanent fixture in Prince William's life, and they had more reason to say that in July when Catherine went to cheer on William and his brother at a polo event. And while Catherine and William followed royal etiquette in public with very few displays of affection, behind closed doors they apparently called each other 'Babykins' and 'Big Willie'.

In December, William graduated from Sandhurst and, along with his family, Catherine was there to watch the ceremony and congratulate him. Although Catherine didn't sit with the senior royals in attendance, the fact that she was there and accompanied by the Prince of Wales' chief of staff, William's private secretary and his diary secretary, only fuelled rumours that a royal engagement was on the horizon.

However, hopes were dashed in 2007. In April, sources reported that the couple had parted ways mutually and amicably, with media attention being a major contributing factor. Catherine certainly hadn't been enjoying the paparazzi presence and it had only been increasing. To the world's delight, the split didn't last and they were back together by June of the same year.

William and Catherine step out of Westminster Abbey after their wedding

*“Over time, Catherine was dubbed ‘Waity Kate’ by the press”*

In June 2008, it seemed that Catherine was being pulled deeper into the royal family. She attended the wedding of Peter Phillips, one of William's cousins, alone as her boyfriend was duty-bound to an event, and later that month attended the ceremony for William becoming the 1,000th Royal Knight of the Garter.

Over time, Catherine was dubbed 'Waity Katie' by the British press, who were wondering why William was taking so long to propose. They had been together since the end of 2003, and the longer they waited, the more excited the media became at the prospect.

What possibly didn't help the rumours were reports emerging in 2009 that the Queen had invited Catherine for an audience at Balmoral over the August bank holiday. A royal source claimed that Queen Elizabeth was planning on discussing how things would change should William ask for her hand in marriage – the clearest of signals that Catherine was being prepared for entering the royal family and life as a future queen.

With pressure mounting about an engagement, the couple carried out their duties and continued to live their lives, ignoring the press. But the media didn't relent. When William and Catherine were pictured at a friend's wedding in October that year, all anyone could notice was how in love they looked. What no one knew was that they had a secret.

William had had his mother's engagement ring (a way of “making sure that [Diana] didn't miss out on the big day”) in his rucksack for three weeks on their trip to Kenya not long before. One night under the stars he got down on one knee – and Catherine had said yes. Not one to break with tradition, William made sure that he'd secured Michael Middleton's permission before popping the question.

The official announcement was made on 16 November 2010, and apparently the Queen only heard about it a few hours before. Appearing in a blue dress that sold out within 24 hours and matched the engagement ring, Catherine stood by her husband-to-be beaming from ear to ear. They were every inch the perfect couple.

A week before the big day, William and Kate paid a visit to Diana's burial site at Althorp Estate. They took a boat to lay flowers at William's mother's resting place on Oval Island, and they walked through the arboretum where William and Harry had planted trees as children.

On 29 April 2011, millions tuned in to watch William and Catherine finally tie the knot. In Westminster Abbey were guests from all walks of life. In fact, when he had initially drafted the guest list, William had told his grandmother that he didn't know any of the 600-plus people that he apparently had to invite. Queen Elizabeth reportedly tore up the list and told her grandson to figure out who he and Catherine wanted to be there and they'd worry about the dignitaries and formalities later.

The night before the ceremony, William was rumoured to have only got about half an hour's sleep due to his nervousness and the screaming fans outside Clarence House, where he was staying, but he arrived fresh-faced and smiling at Westminster Abbey in the red uniform of the Irish Guards, the unit of which he was a colonel. Accompanied by Prince Harry, his best man, he was followed by the Middleton family and the royal family, with the Queen and Prince Philip being the last to arrive before the bridal party.

Catherine's dress was shrouded in the utmost secrecy. The entrance of the Goring Hotel in

**An early photograph of the couple at university**

Everyone noticed how in love the couple looked at a wedding in October 2010 - what they didn't know was that William had already proposed

## A royal tradition

### While some toss their bouquet after their wedding, the royal family has a different custom

It was Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who was the first to lay her bridal bouquet on the tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, the grave of an anonymous soldier killed in action in World War I. As she and her husband, the future George VI, made their way to the west end of the Abbey after her ceremony on 26 April 1923, she lay her flowers on the grave in memory of her brother Fergus, who was killed on the Western Front in 1915. Since then, many British royal brides like Sarah Ferguson, who married the Queen's youngest son, Prince Andrew, have done the same thing, and Catherine was no exception.

Although she can be seen posing with her wedding bouquet in the official photographs that were taken after the service at Buckingham Palace, the arrangement was then taken back to Westminster Abbey and laid on the tomb as a symbol of remembrance. In May 2018, Meghan Markle followed suit. Although she and Prince Harry were married at St George's Chapel in Windsor, her flowers still found their way to their traditional resting place.

THE CHIEFS OF HIS FORCES
AND A VAST CONCOURSE OF THE NATION
THUS ARE COMMEMORATED THE MANY
MULTITUDES WHO DURING THE GREAT
WAR OF 1914-1918 GAVE THE MOST THAT
MAN CAN GIVE LIFE ITSELF
FOR GOD
FOR KING AND COUNTRY

Catherine's flowers on the Unknown Warrior's grave

where the Middleton family stayed the night before the wedding was covered in a marquee so that the future duchess could slide into the Rolls Royce unobserved at 10.51am on the day. When she stepped out of the car at the steps of the Abbey, she stunned everyone in her Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen satin and lace A-line dress with a bodice applique woven with shamrocks, roses and lilies that was rumoured to have cost £250,000. She also had a blue bow sewn into the dress for good luck, just like her late mother-in-law had done when she married Prince Charles in 1981. Her veil was held by a Cartier Scroll Tiara, made in 1936 and lent by the Queen – almost the final royal seal of approval – while her earrings had been commissioned by her parents and included the Middleton coat of arms. During the three-and-a-half minute procession down the aisle to an angelic choir with her father and followed by her maid of honour, sister Philippa, William was forced to keep looking forwards. But that didn't stop Harry from leaning over and whispering, "She looks stunning."

Even Catherine's bouquet was designer, having been created by Shane Connolly. It was a fusion of the Middletons' and the royal family's favourites, with each stem holding a meaning. The dominant flower was lily of the valley, which is seen to be a favourite for summer weddings and symbolises a return to happiness,

**TOP** At the Concert for Diana in 2007, Catherine's appearance in the royal box in the third row from the front suggested that her relationship with William wasn't over

**ABOVE** Prince Harry has described Catherine as the big sister he never had, and was always a strong supporter of their relationship

JU5T WED
VOLANTE

> *"The couple disappeared inside before making their way onto the balcony for their now famous balcony appearance"*

but there was also some Sweet William in there as a nod to her groom and to represent gallantry. There was also the traditional myrtle, picked from a bush that was planted by Queen Victoria at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, which has featured in the bouquets of so many royal brides as the emblem of marriage. The ivy and hyacinths both stand for love.

The service itself was a magnificent affair. Three high-ranking members of the Church of England clergy had the leading roles – John Hall, the dean of Westminster, conducted the service, while the archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, married the couple and bishop of London Richard Chartres gave the address. Members of Catherine's family also had their roles in the ceremony. While her sister, Philippa, was maid of honour, her brother, James, read the lesson. The service lasted just over an hour and the couple became Their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge but, more importantly, husband and wife.

On the way out of the Abbey, they stopped to bow to the Queen and then it was on to the reception at Buckingham Palace. They paraded through London in the 1902 State Landau carriage that was originally built for Edward VII's coronation on a route that took them through Whitehall, which was lined with an honour guard comprising the RAF, the Grenadier guards, the Scots guards and other regiments before arriving the palace.

It was there that the couple disappeared inside before making their way onto the balcony for their now famous balcony appearance that featured the rare second kiss in front of the huge crowd that had gathered. At 3.30pm, it was time to leave once again and the couple sped off to Clarence House in the blue Aston Martin DB6 Volante that had been given to Prince Charles for his 21st birthday and had been modified a little by Prince Harry with a number plate reading 'JU5T WED'.

Later that evening, they returned to the palace for a private dinner hosted by Prince Charles, followed by dancing with close friends and family. Ellie Goulding performed at the event, with her rendition of *Your Song*, chosen as the music for the first dance, and the whole affair finished with a small firework display in the palace grounds at 3am.

**After their vows at Westminster Abbey, the married couple celebrated their wedding reception back at Buckingham Palace with friends and family**

# 14 Notorious royal mistresses

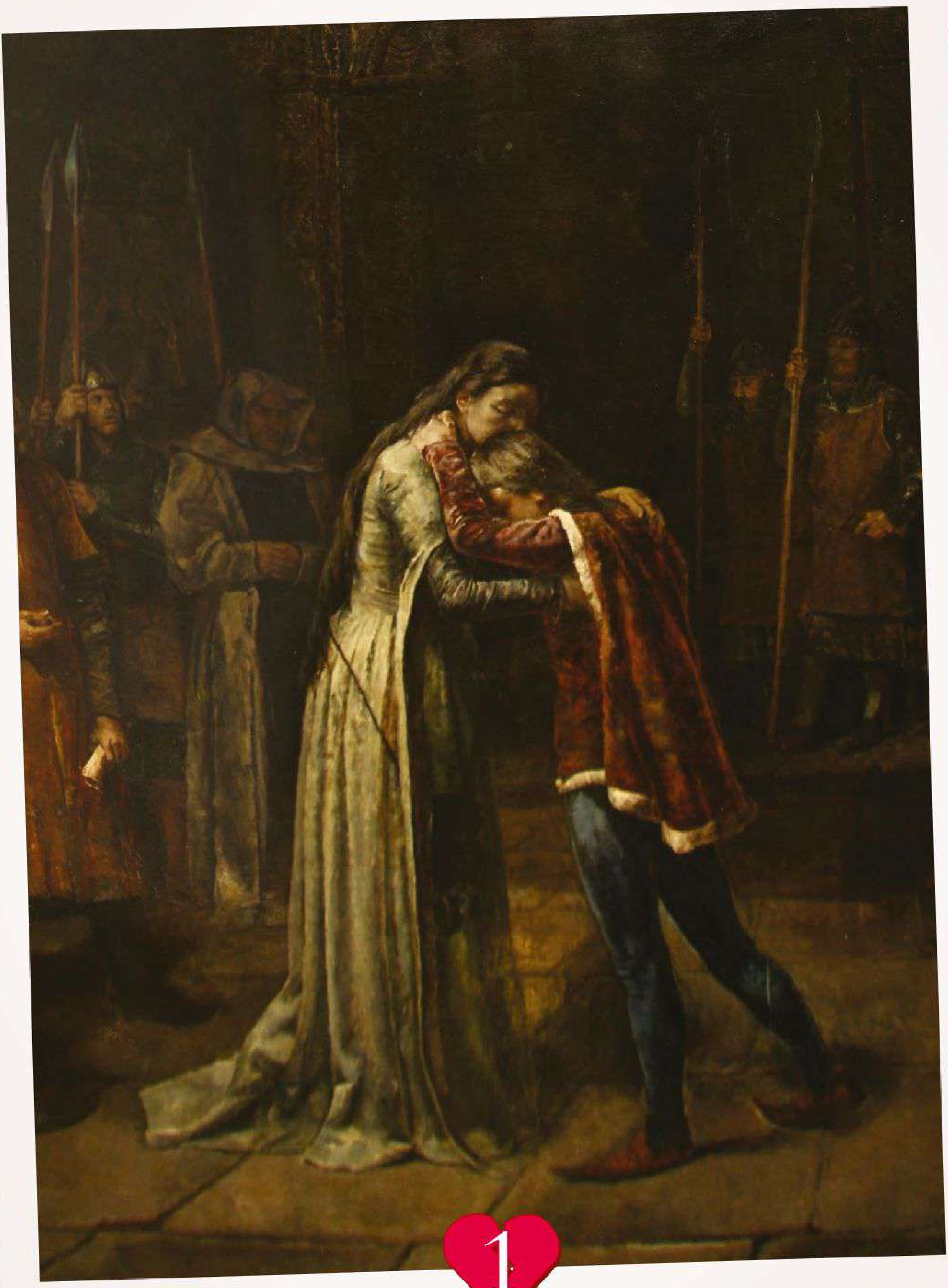
## The beauties, harlots and seductresses who vied for power from the royal bedchamber

**Written by Nicola Tallis**

When a king succeeded to his title, he not only inherited the throne, but all of the trappings of royalty that came with it: jewels, palaces, money and servants to name but a few. It also became almost traditional for a king to have something else: a mistress. In many instances the king would take more than one mistress, and the women selected to join the king in his bedchamber would be chosen for a variety of reasons, and because they fulfilled certain criteria desirable to the king. Satisfying a king's sexual desires was only part of the equation and, in addition, mistresses were often expected to entertain their royal lovers and provide good company.

Mistresses were frequently a cause of fascination to a king's court and subjects, and often triggered as much interest as the king themselves. While some shied away from this attention and did not seek any form of preferment, the majority actively encouraged this and flaunted themselves publicly. Moreover, mistresses often took full advantage of their position in order to promote their own interests, and those of their family and friends. If they were pleasing to the king, the rewards could be great – and life-changing.

Many mistresses came to exert an alarming amount of influence over their royal lovers, and sought not only their own advancement but also sometimes dabbled in politics. Unsurprisingly, this often led to resentment and jealousy both at court and between mistresses, and many were unpopular. In order to counteract a mistress's hold over a king, alternative candidates for his affection might be pushed forward in the hope of catching his eye. Whether loved or loathed, throughout history mistresses have proven to be just as great a talking point as kings and queens. Here are the stories of some of the most memorable.



1

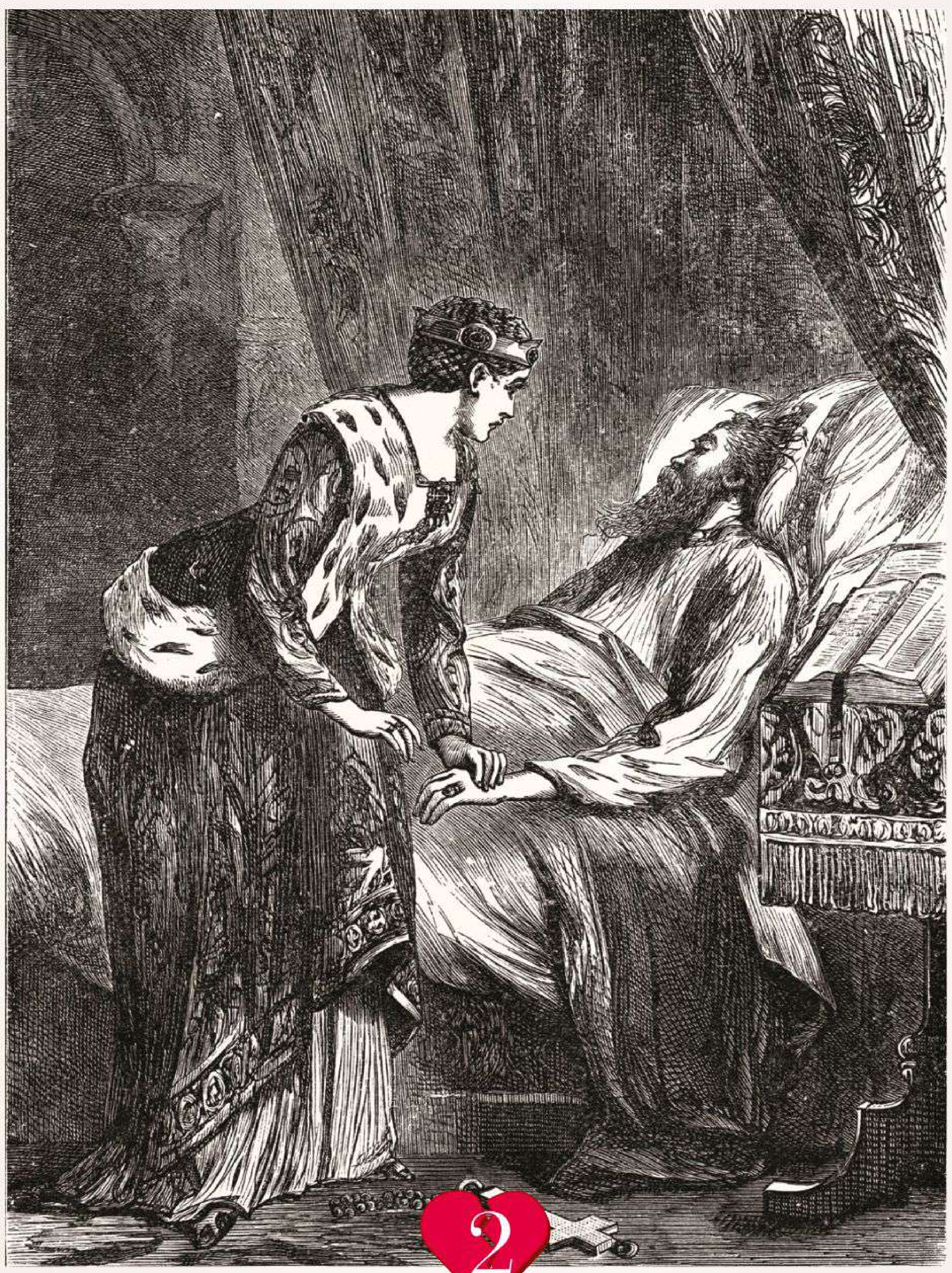
# Eleanor de Guzman

Royal lover: **Alfonso XI of Castile**
Years as mistress : **1328-50**

In around 1328, Alfonso met the beautiful Eleanor in Seville, and despite being recently married to Maria of Portugal, swiftly made Eleanor his mistress. In a further humiliating snub to Maria, in 1334 he abandoned her to live openly with Eleanor instead. Her royal lover's favour died with him in 1350, however, and intent upon revenge, Queen Maria ordered Eleanor's imprisonment and execution in 1351. However, Eleanor and Alfonso's son, Henry, eventually toppled Maria's son, Peter, and succeeded in becoming king of Castile.

◆

*The king took a beau from Seville*
*But things took a turn for the ill*
*When the queen came to rule*
*She was vicious and cruel*
*But was chucked from the throne of Castile*



2

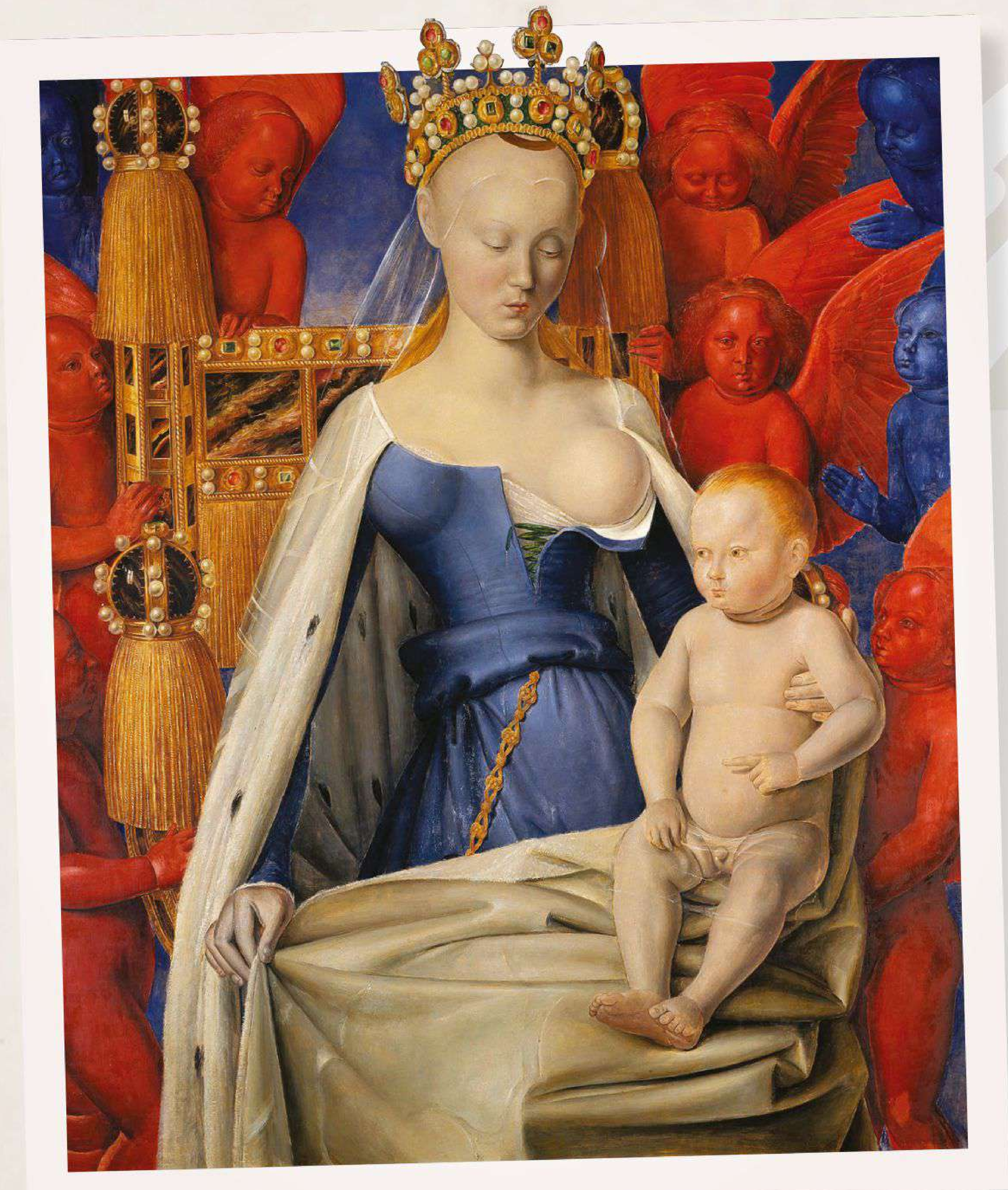
# Alice Perrers

Royal lover: **Edward III of England**
Years as mistress: **c.1364-77**

Serving in the household of Edward III's wife, Queen Philippa, Alice caught the king's eye. Their relationship was not made public, however, until after Philippa's death in 1369. Alice was a grasping mistress who took full advantage of her position, accepting numerous costly gifts both from the king and those who wished to curry his favour. Unsurprisingly she was unpopular, and allegedly stole the rings from her lover's fingers as he lay dying. Following Edward's death, Alice was banished from court and never regained her former influence.

◆

*There once was a servant who said*
*"I'd rather serve the king in his bed"*
*Then when he died*
*She pulled and she pried*
*The rings from his fingers instead*



3

# Agnes Sorel

Royal lover: Charles VII of France
Years as mistress: 1444-50

Regarded as a woman of exceptional beauty, Agnes managed to retain her royal lover's adoration until her death. She was made the first official royal mistress and was granted immense wealth to match her status. Agnes's influence with the king aroused plenty of jealousy, although she managed to remain on good terms with his wife, Queen Marie. When Agnes died in 1450, it was widely suspected that she had been poisoned, a theory that has been supported by recent scientific discoveries.

◆

*She thought she was in with a chance*
*When dubbed royal mistress of France*
*But beauty and wealth*
*Can't buy you good health*
*For death is the foe of romance*

# Mary Boleyn

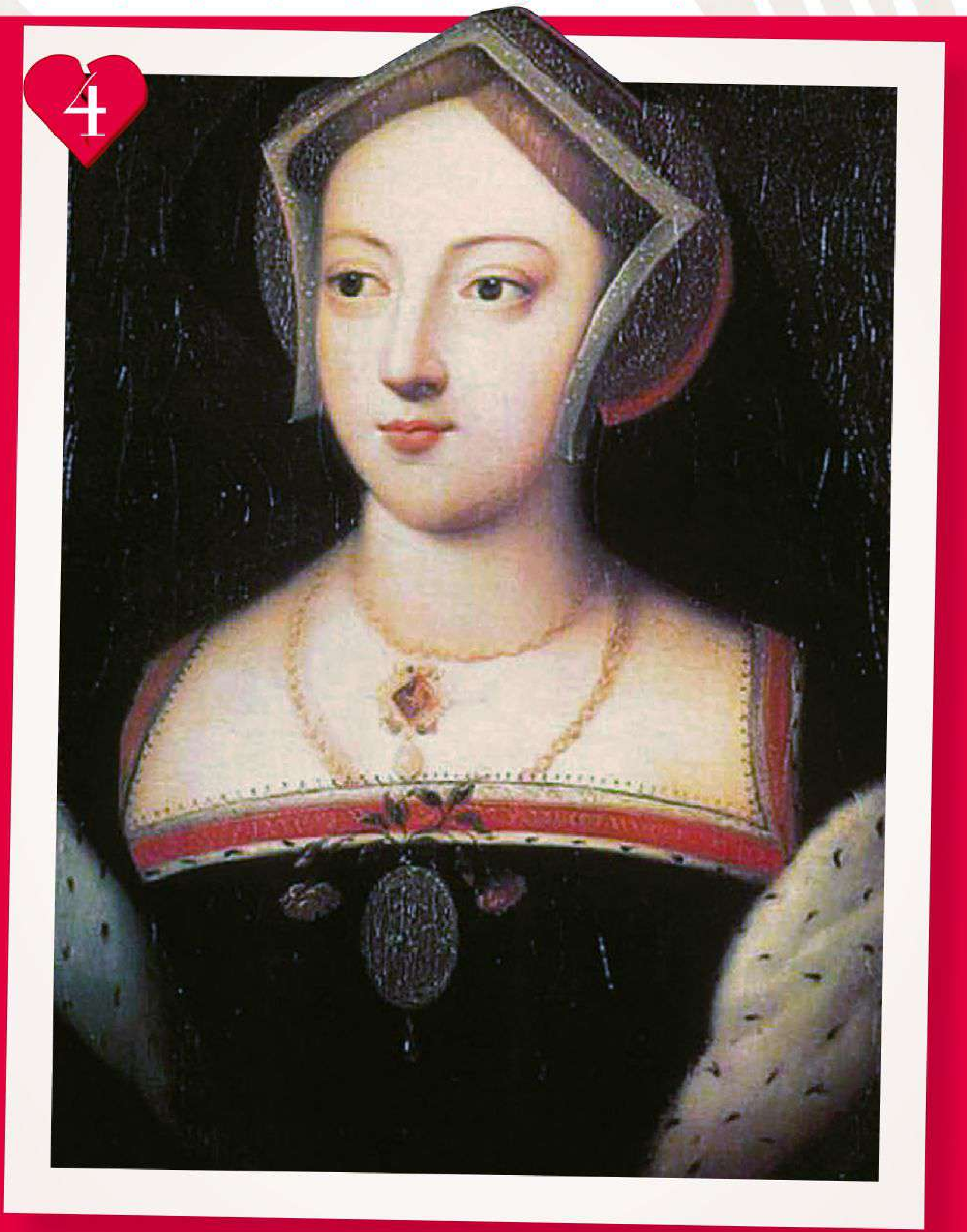
Royal lover: Henry VIII of England
Years as mistress: c.1522-24/25

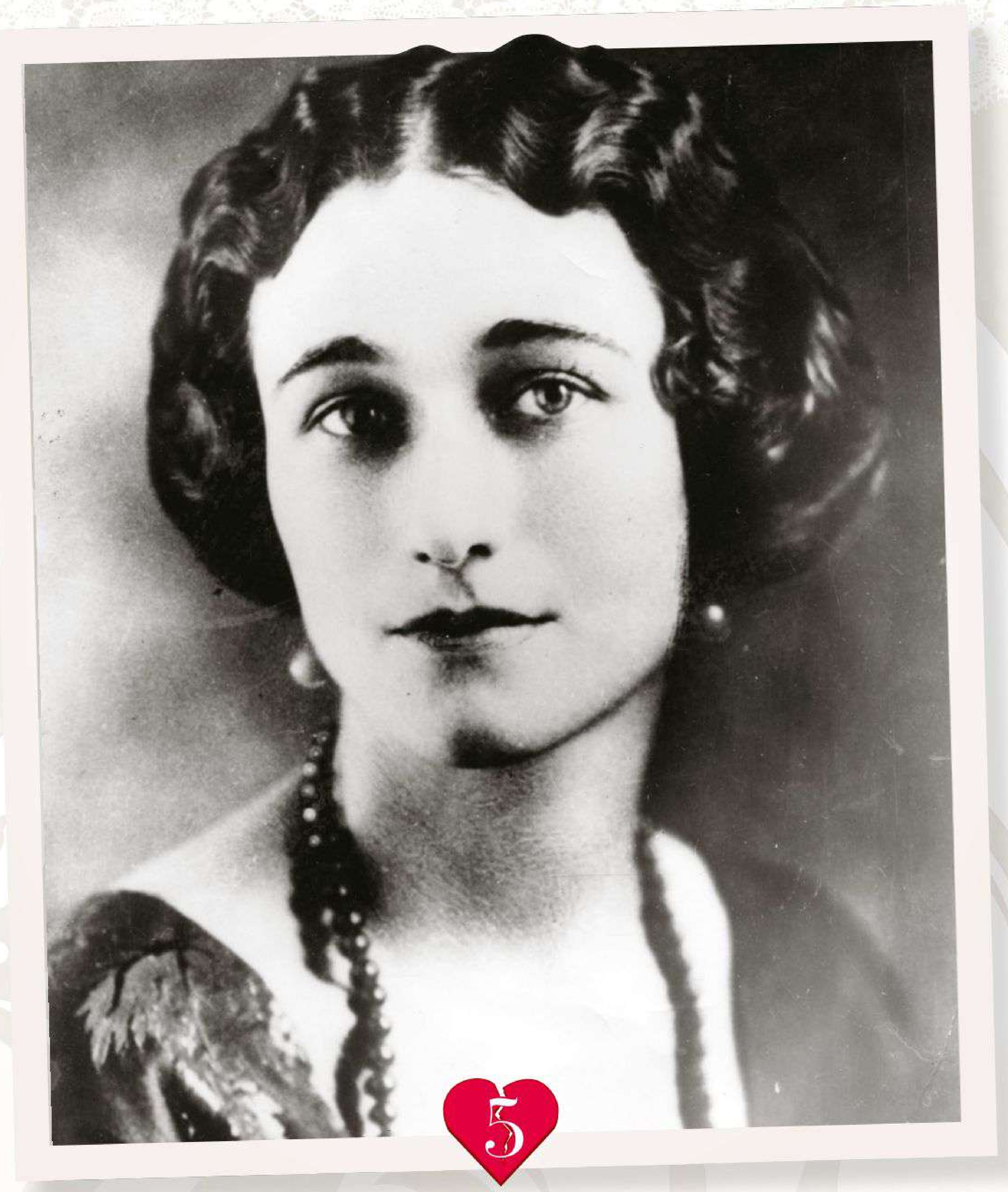
The most notorious of Henry VIII's mistresses, Mary was also the elder sister of Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn. Her affair with the king, however, was over long before her sister's marriage. Nevertheless, at the time of their affair Henry was married to Katherine of Aragon, while Mary had been married to William Carey since 1520. Though Mary appears to have received little in terms of material benefits from the relationship, her husband received a number of royal grants suggestive of the monarch's gratitude. The affair was conducted discreetly, and the only public reference the king made was in 1535 when he was accused of having an affair with both Anne Boleyn's mother and sister. "Never with the mother," Henry replied firmly. Despite this, it is likely that Henry fathered Mary's eldest child, a daughter named Catherine. In 1543, Mary died in obscurity.

◆

*Mary played a dangerous game*
*And she nearly got some of the same*
*As her dear sister Anne*
*Who fell afoul of the man*
*That gave the Tudors their fame*

4





5

# Wallis Simpson

Royal lover: Edward VIII of England Years as mistress: 1934-37

The daughter of an unsuccessful American businessman, Wallis's story was a classic case of rags to riches. On 10 January 1931, in the house of Lady Furness in Melton Mowbray, Wallis met the man who would become her third husband: Edward, prince of Wales. By 1934, Edward had become completely dependent upon Wallis, and despite his position as heir to the throne and the fact that Wallis had been married twice, he was determined to make her his wife. Edward's love for Wallis did not fade when, on 20 January 1936, he ascended the throne as Edward VIII. By this time their affair was public, but there was one major obstacle: Wallis was in the process of divorcing her second husband, Ernest Simpson, and the whole situation was causing a scandal. Realising he was unable to marry her and retain his throne, Edward refused to give Wallis up - even if it meant abdication. Wallis, however, was determined that her lover ought not to abdicate, and tried every method of persuasion to convince him. But his love for Wallis overcame his sense of royal duty and, on 11 December 1936, Edward VIII abdicated in favour of his younger brother, who succeeded as George VI. Edward instead took up the title of Duke of Windsor, and following her divorce, Edward and Wallis were married in Touraine in 1937. The Windsors spent the rest of their married life together living abroad, and, despite their marriage, Wallis was not accepted or received by the royal family.

◆

*Suffice to say she changed his life*
*Just by being another chap's wife*
*They said, "Would you mind,*
*If you left her behind?"*
*And jabbed in his back with a knife*

## Philandering kings and their illicit brood

With every royal affair came the risk of pregnancy. While some monarchs and mistresses openly embraced and flaunted their offspring, others were eager to keep them under wraps. For example, Charles II acknowledged most of his illegitimate children, and made sure that they were well provided for. By contrast, Henry VIII was so discreet about his extra-marital affairs that it is unclear precisely how many illegitimate children he had.

### ISMAIL OF MOROCCO

Number of illegitimate children: 888–1,000

1,000

### HENRY I OF ENGLAND

Number of illegitimate children: 15 acknowledged, but perhaps as many as 25

### CHARLES II OF ENGLAND

Number of illegitimate children: 14 – 16

### LOUIS XIV OF FRANCE

Number of illegitimate children: 12

### WILLIAM IV OF ENGLAND

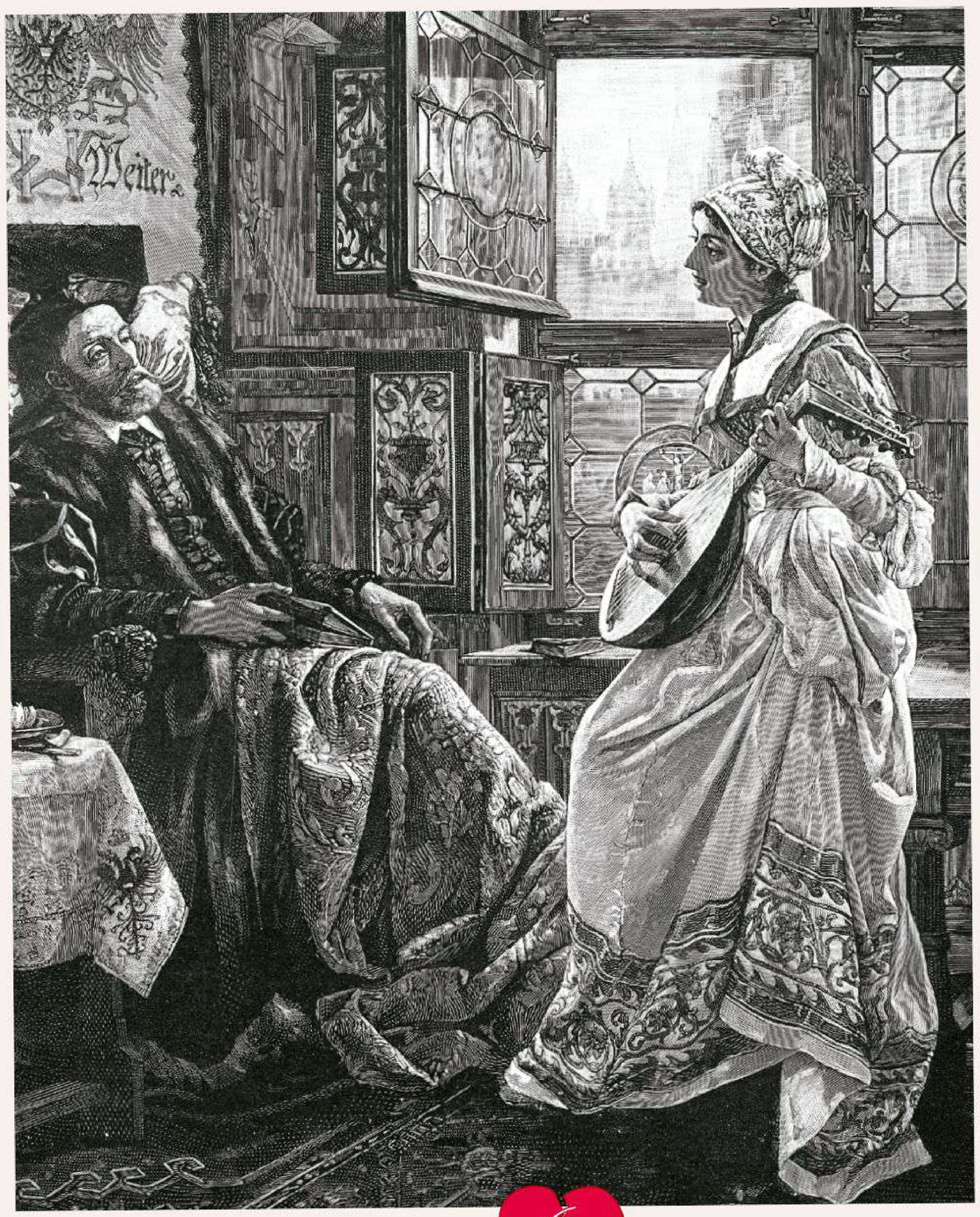
Number of illegitimate children: 10

### MAGNUS III OF NORWAY

Number of illegitimate children: 5 acknowledged, but possibly 8

### CHARLES V, HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR

Number of illegitimate children: 4 or possibly 5



6

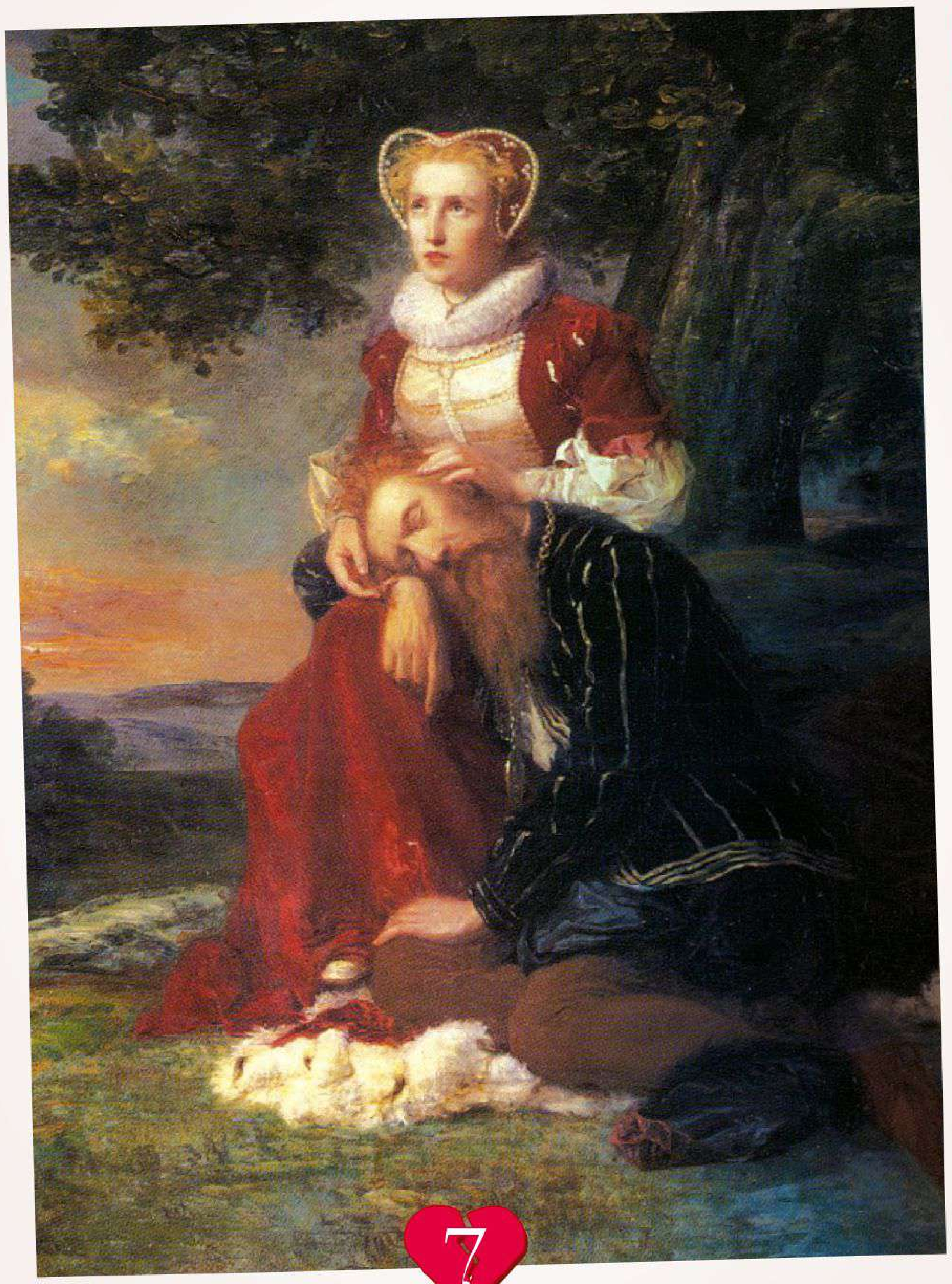
# Barbara Blomberg

Royal Lover: Emperor Charles V
Years as mistress: 1546

A singer by occupation and from a good Ratisbon family, Barbara's affair with the Emperor Charles V didn't last long. Her liaison with the most powerful monarch in Europe began when she sang for the emperor. His wife, Isabella of Portugal, was dead, and rather than remarry, Charles had taken solace in the arms of several mistresses. Though Barbara wielded no power over her royal lover and their affair was little more than a brief fling, it did result in Barbara's pregnancy. In February 1547, she gave birth to a son. Named John of Austria, the baby was taken from his mother almost immediately. Instead, his royal father had decided that he ought to be raised in Spain, while Barbara was married off to Hieronymus Kegel. She had three further children with her husband, but only met her son by the emperor once - in 1576. John was her greatest legacy, and went on to excel in the military service of his half-brother, Philip II of Spain, at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

◆

*Babs bagged a king with a song*
*But things went suddenly wrong*
*She gave him a lad*
*And he was ever so glad*
*But thought it was time she moved on*



7

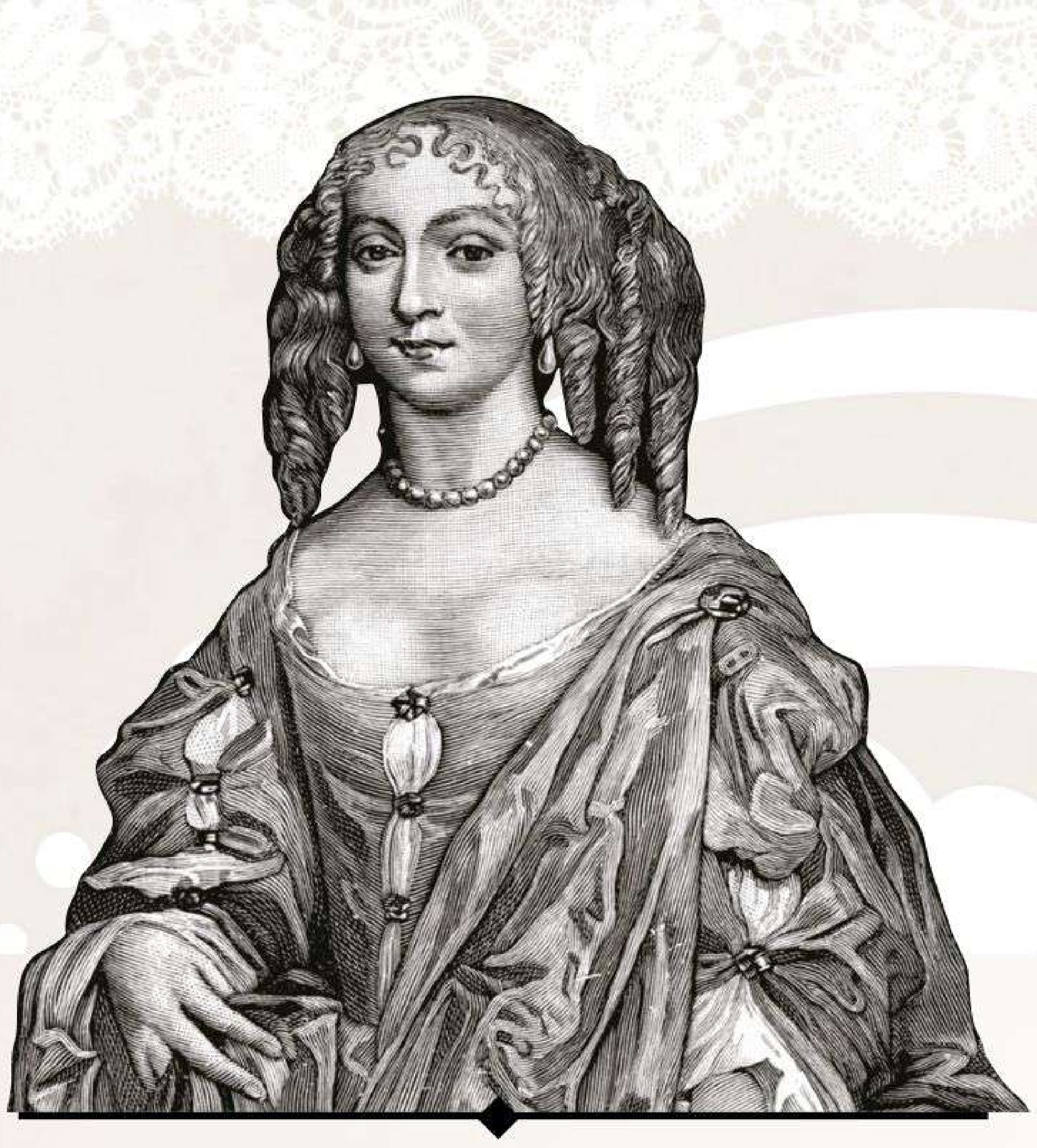
# Karin Mansdotter

Royal lover: Eric XIV of Sweden
Years as mistress: 1565-77

Openly paraded at court as the king's mistress, Karin was given all the trappings a royal mistress could expect: costly clothes, a lavish suite of apartments at court and a host of servants. Eric XIV had had various mistresses, but so infatuated was he with Karin that she became his sole official mistress. Moreover, in 1567, Eric went one step further and married his mistress in secret. The following year the couple married again in a public ceremony: Karin was now queen of Sweden. Her husband, however, was mentally unstable, and shortly after their second wedding Eric was overthrown by his own brothers. His family were imprisoned, and though Karin was initially allowed to remain with her husband, the births of two children meant that the couple were eventually separated. Karin was sent to Finland, where she remained under arrest until the death of her husband in 1577. She spent the rest of her life living quietly in a royal estate.

◆

*He married her twice so it's true*
*That he loved her and everyone knew*
*But alas for the queen*
*Life wasn't a dream*
*And she was driven to Finland to stew*



## 8

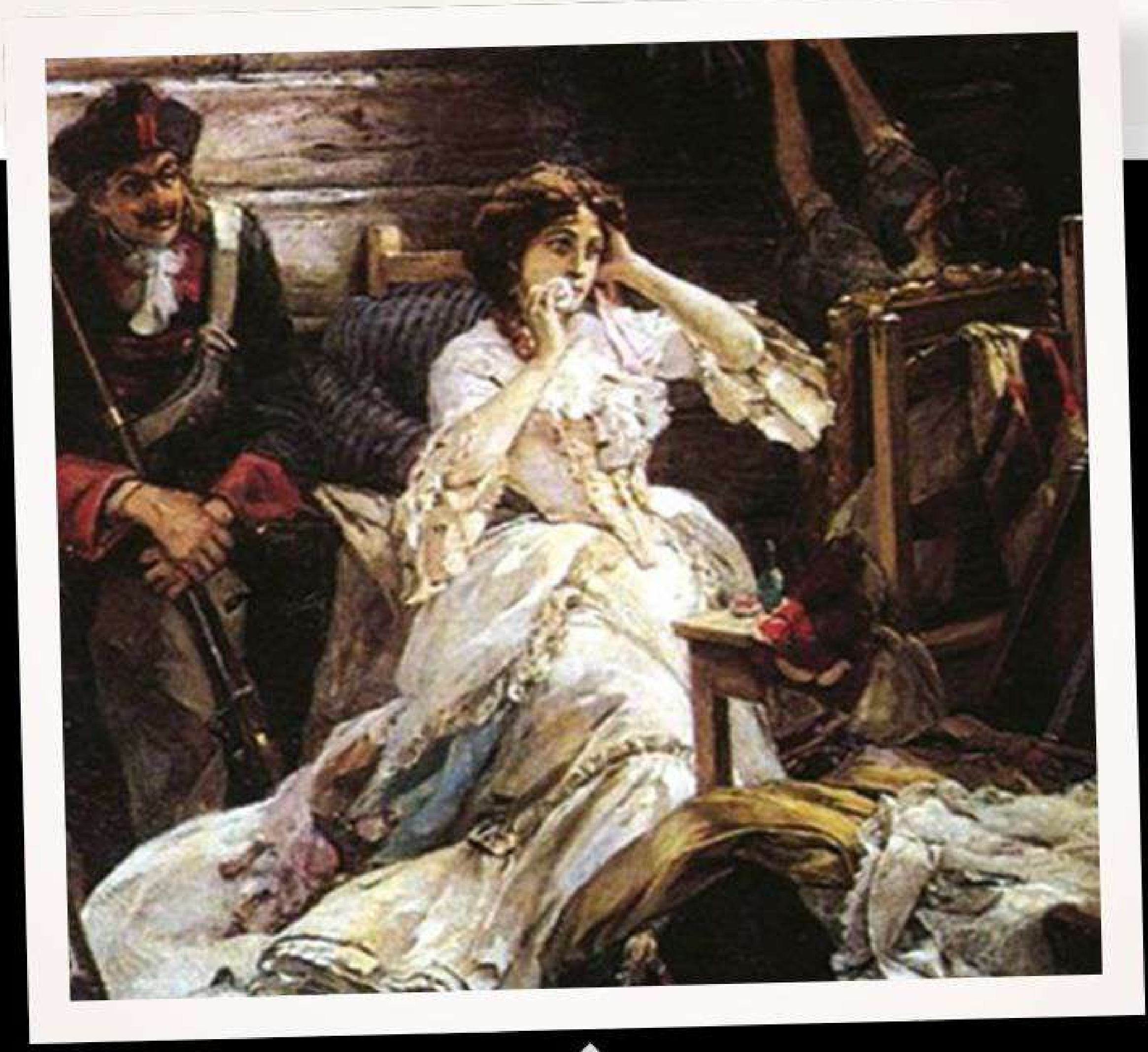
# Nell Gwynn

**Royal lover:** Charles II of England **Years as mistress:** 1668-85

*Nell once made bread on the stage*
*But played the star role of her age*
*Kept by the king*
*With no title or ring*
*A pet in a sumptuous cage*

Nell's position as a royal mistress was life-changing. The most famous of Charles II's mistresses was of humble origin, rising from orange seller to actress, and then to royal mistress. Neither was Charles the first of her lovers, as Nell had been previously involved with both Charles Hart and Charles Sackville. Nell was popular, and managed to retain the king's love through her wit and sense of humour; she was referred to as "pretty, witty Nell".

She was utterly faithful to Charles, and in return for her services Nell was rewarded with a town house on Pall Mall, and was comfortably provided for. Unlike several of the king's other mistresses, however, Nell was given no title. Nevertheless, she lived in luxury and had two sons by the king, one of whom became Duke of St Albans. At the time of Charles's death, Bishop Burnet claimed that the king had urged his successor to, "Let not poor Nelly starve."



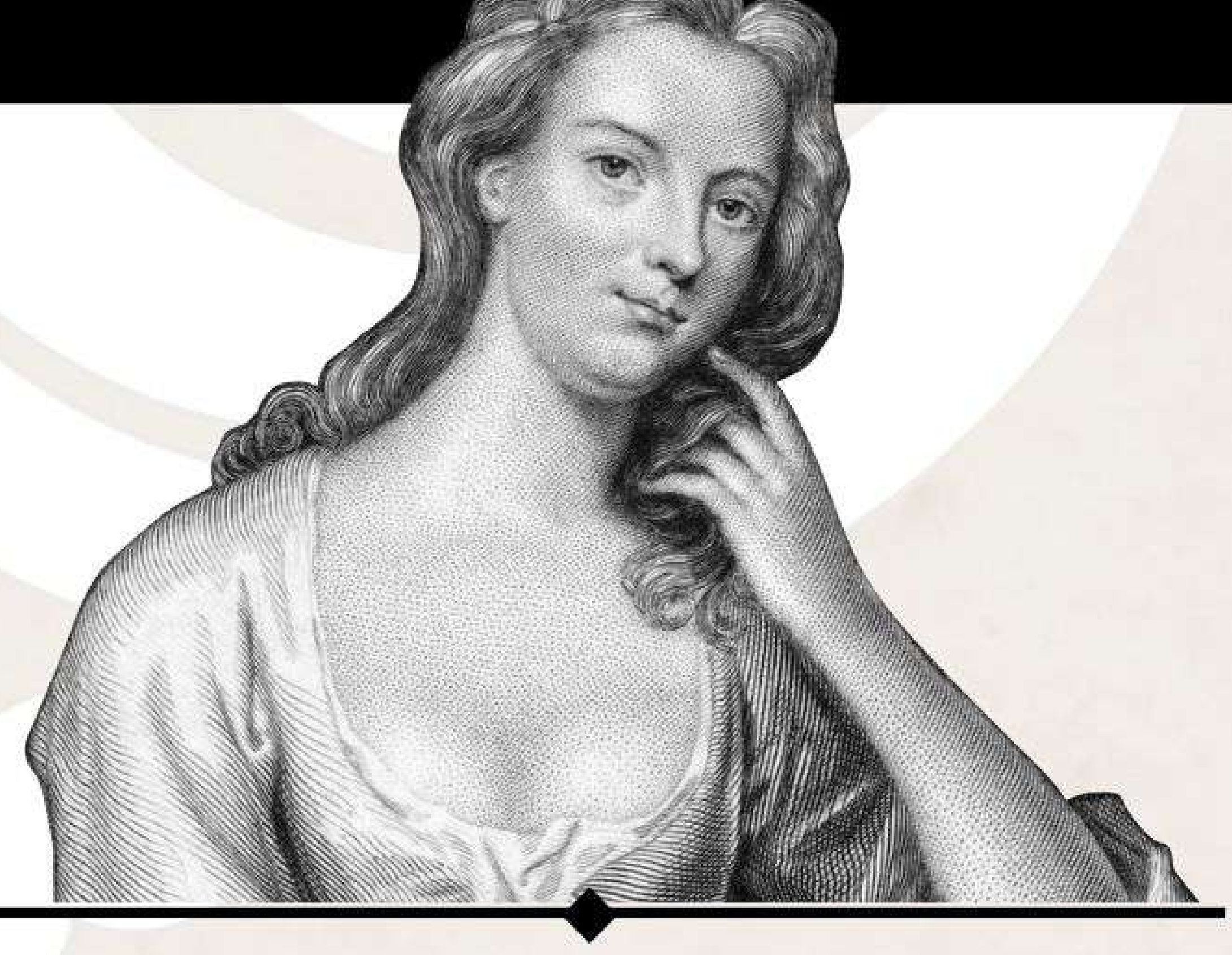
## 9

# Mary Hamilton

**Royal Lover:** Peter the Great of Russia
**Years as mistress:** 1713-17

*Mary went a bit too far*
*In knocking boots with a tsar*
*She lied to him*
*And for her sin*
*Her severed head rose like a star*

A Scot by birth, Mary emigrated to Russia where she joined the household of the Empress Catherine in 1713. It was here that she caught the eye of Catherine's powerful husband, Peter the Great, but their love affair was destined to end dramatically. Peter was not Mary's only lover, and she was simultaneously conducting an affair with Ivan Mikhailovich Orlov. However, she was devastated when she learned that Ivan was also the lover of another of Peter's mistresses, Avdotya Chernysheva. Desperate to try and win back his affection, Mary presented Ivan with a number of costly gifts that she had stolen from her royal mistress. When Mary's rooms were searched in 1717, several of Catherine's belongings were discovered there, and Mary was arrested. To make matters worse, it came to light that she had not only had an abortion, but that she had also given birth in secret to a baby that she had proceeded to drown. In November 1718, Mary was found guilty of theft, abortion and infanticide, and was sentenced to death by her royal lover. On 14 March 1719, Mary was beheaded with a sword. In a last bitter encounter, Peter raised her head to the assembled crowd, kissed it and then threw it to the ground.



## 10

# Henrietta Howard

**Royal lover:** George II of England **Years as mistress:** 1723-34

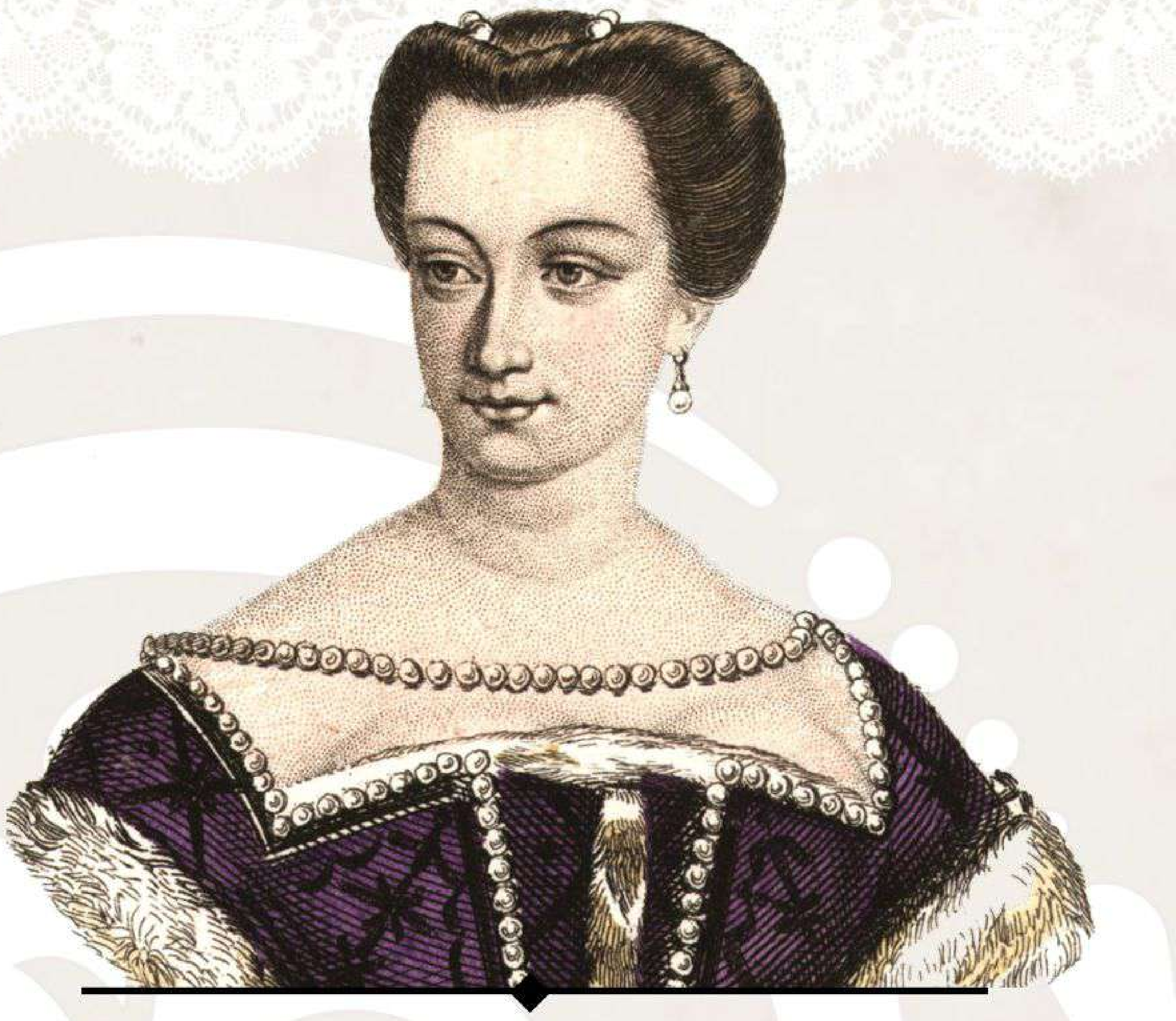
*Her royal tryst was all so clean*
*With the blessing of the queen*
*Without a rival*
*Her survival*
*Was guaranteed, her life serene*

Travelling to Hanover, Henrietta planned to ingratiate herself with the future George I. There, she met and became close to his son, the future George II. When he journeyed with his wife, Caroline of Ansbach, to England to take up his place in his father's court, Henrietta obtained a position in Caroline's household as a woman of the bedchamber. Her husband was also given a place at court, and Henrietta quickly became popular as she was attractive and renowned for her wit. Although George was deeply in love with Caroline, he felt duty bound to take a mistress, and selected Henrietta with his wife's full knowledge and approval. Unlike some other royal mistresses, Henrietta was unassuming, and did not crave power and influence. She continued to serve in Caroline's household, and was rewarded with an increase in her wages and protection from her abusive husband. A more tangible reminder of their affair survives in the form of Marble Hill House, the splendid Twickenham home George built for his obliging mistress.

11

# Diane de Poitiers

Royal lover: Henry II of France Years as mistress: 1534-59



Henry and Diane's relationship began in Henry's youth. As he grew, so too did his devotion to the enchantingly beautiful and intelligent Diane, and it was a love that would endure until the end of his life. In 1533, Henry was married to Catherine de Medici, a match for which he had little taste. It was Diane, realising his need to sire male heirs, who encouraged Henry to visit his wife's bedchamber, and though the marriage was unsuccessful in personal terms, it did produce ten children. Diane wielded great influence over her royal lover, and enjoyed the privileges that came with the role of mistress. She was created Duchess d'Etampes and given several important royal manors, but earned the enmity of Queen Catherine. When Henry died in a jousting accident in 1559, the opportunity for revenge presented itself. Diane's power immediately fell away, and she was forced to spend the remainder of her life away from court.

*Diane was surprisingly fair*
*She saw Henry needed an heir*
*So she sent him to mate*
*With the wife he did hate*
*And he sired ten kids in her lair*

12

# Lillie Langtree

Royal lover: Edward VII of England Years as mistress: 1877-80

*Eddie caused sweet Lillie glee*
*In their love nest by the sea*
*But then it ended*
*So she befriended*
*The prince of another country*

A famous beauty and successful actress, it was not long before Lillie caught King Edward VII's eye. He asked to be seated next to her at a dinner party on 24 May 1877 and became infatuated with her. Edward was, at this time, prince of Wales, and a married father to six children. Lillie was also married, her husband being Edward Langtry, and her relationship with the prince was not the first of her extra-marital affairs. Edward was generous to his mistress, often spending vast amounts of money on her, and building her a house in Bournemouth. Lillie was even accepted by Edward's wife, Alexandra.

The relationship, however, came to an end when French stage and film actress Sarah Bernhardt superseded Lillie in the prince's affections, but the two remained on good terms. Furthermore, it was not long before Lillie, too, moved on from the affair, and became embroiled with several others. She became pregnant by Prince Louis of Battenberg, and subsequently gave birth to a daughter. By this time she was estranged from her husband, and they eventually divorced. In 1899, she married Hugo Gerald de Bathe, a marriage of convenience. Lillie died in 1929 and was buried in Jersey.

## *Risks and rewards of being a royal mistress*

### Pros

**LAVISH GIFTS**

Gifts were a perk that came in many forms and from lots of people: not only a lover, but also those who sought to bribe her to use her influence with the monarch.

**GRAND TITLES**

If a mistress was favoured, she might get a title. Charles II made two of his mistresses duchess of Cleveland and duchess of Portsmouth respectively.

**NEW PLACE**

A new house was the ultimate sign of royal affection. Leopold II of Belgium's lover was given a villa on the French Riviera.

### Cons

**FICKLE FORTUNES**

The moment a woman became a mistress she faced stiff competition. If the king became bored of her, she could be cast away at any time.

**VENEREAL DISEASE**

Kings often had more than one mistress, and women too could be promiscuous. This naturally meant that there was a risk of venereal disease.

**DEATH**

Death in childbirth was a possibility for a mistress who became pregnant. Chillingly, if she betrayed the king, the consequences could be fatal.

13

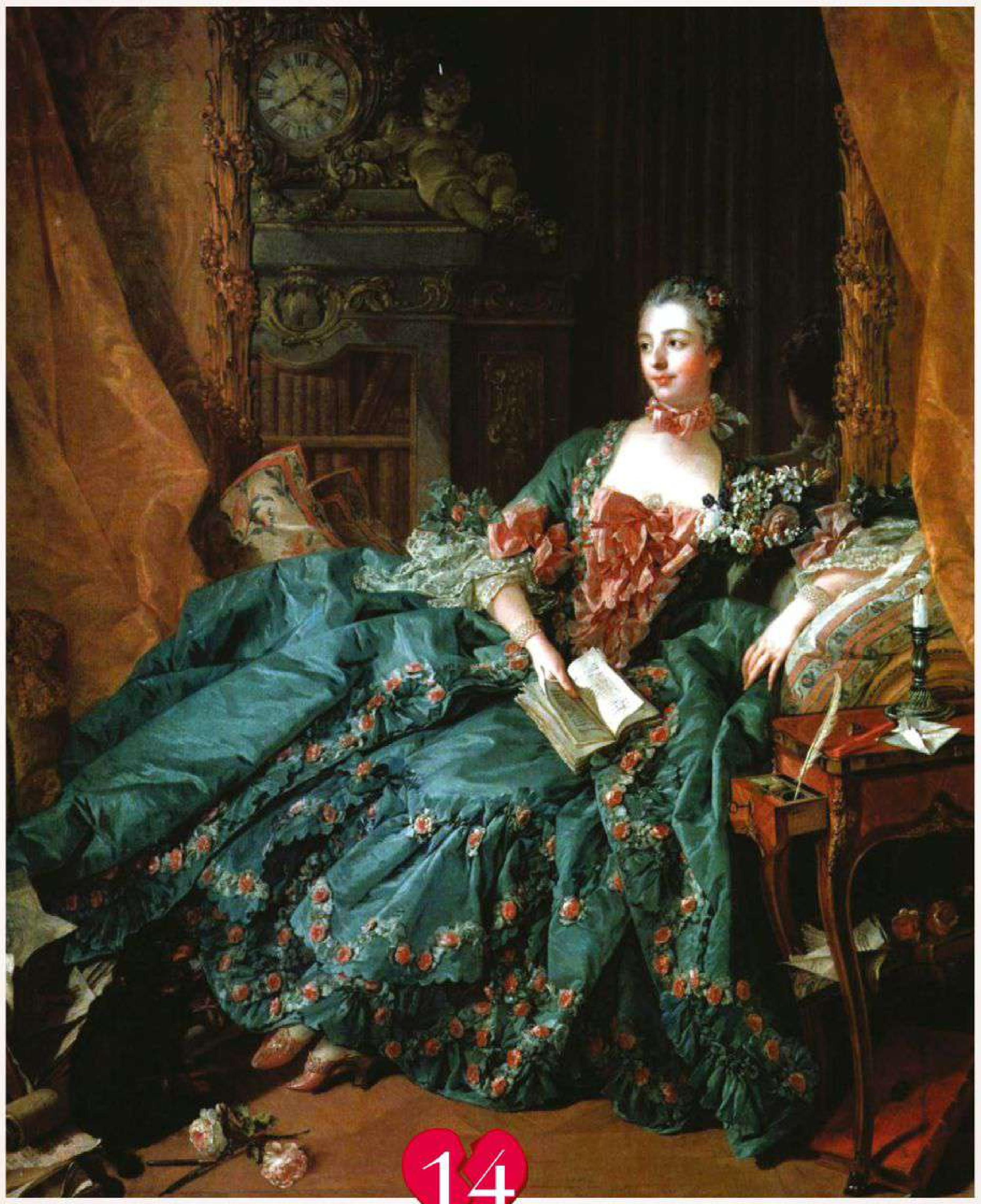
# Empress Dowager Cixi

Royal lover: **Xianfeng Emperor** Years as mistress: **1852-61**

In 1852, 16-year-old Cixi became one of many concubines of the Emperor Xianfeng. Among the concubines Cixi ranked relatively low - fifth rank - but in 1856 her position changed when she gave birth to a healthy son, Zaichun. Zaichun was Xianfeng's only surviving heir, and his birth significantly improved Cixi's standing at court. When Xianfeng died in 1861, Zaichun was only five years old, and Xianfeng had therefore provided for a regency council. However, this did not prevent Cixi from launching her own bid for power, and she successfully mounted a coup against the regents. Her intention was to exert power through her son, crowned Emperor Tongzhi. However, when Tongzhi died in 1875, Cixi was not ready to hand over the reins. Her three-year-old nephew, Guangxu, succeeded, and in order to retain her position, Cixi adopted him. Though she retired for a brief time when Guangxu reached his majority, she soon forced her way back to the forefront, and there she remained until her death in 1908. Cixi was opposed to many of the reforms implemented by her nephew, and eventually had him placed under virtual house arrest. Cixi has acquired a reputation for cruelty, and she did not hesitate when it came to the removal of her enemies. She was suspected of having been responsible for the poisoning of her nephew, who died only a day before her, and this is certainly a possibility. What is certain is that by her death, Cixi had become the most powerful woman in China.

◆

*She wasn't the best of the crop*
*(And the Emperor had rather a lot)*
*But she gave him a son*
*So she basically won*
*And schemed her way to the top*



14

# Madame de Pompadour

Royal lover: **Louis XV of France**
Years as mistress: **1745-64**

Louis XV's official mistress became one of the most powerful women in 18th-century France. When friends introduced her at the royal court, it was not long before the king noticed her at a masked ball. Within a short space of time, Pompadour was in the king's bed, and she became his favourite mistress. She was given a luxurious apartment at the Palace of Versailles, where Louis frequently visited her by means of a secret staircase. The infatuated monarch even built the Petit Trianon in the grounds of Versailles to provide her with a peaceful retreat. More dangerously, Pompadour also became Louis's adviser, and though their sexual relationship ceased in the 1750s, she retained influence over the king for the rest of her life. She even provided Louis with replacement mistresses, ensuring they would pose no threat to herself. Pompadour had varied cultural interests, and under her auspices the Sevres porcelain factory was established. When Pompadour died of tuberculosis on 15 April 1764, Louis mourned the loss of his former lover and friend greatly.

◆

*She met his majesty at the ball*
*And answered to his every call*
*She supported art*
*And broke his heart*
*When her coffin dropped into a hole*

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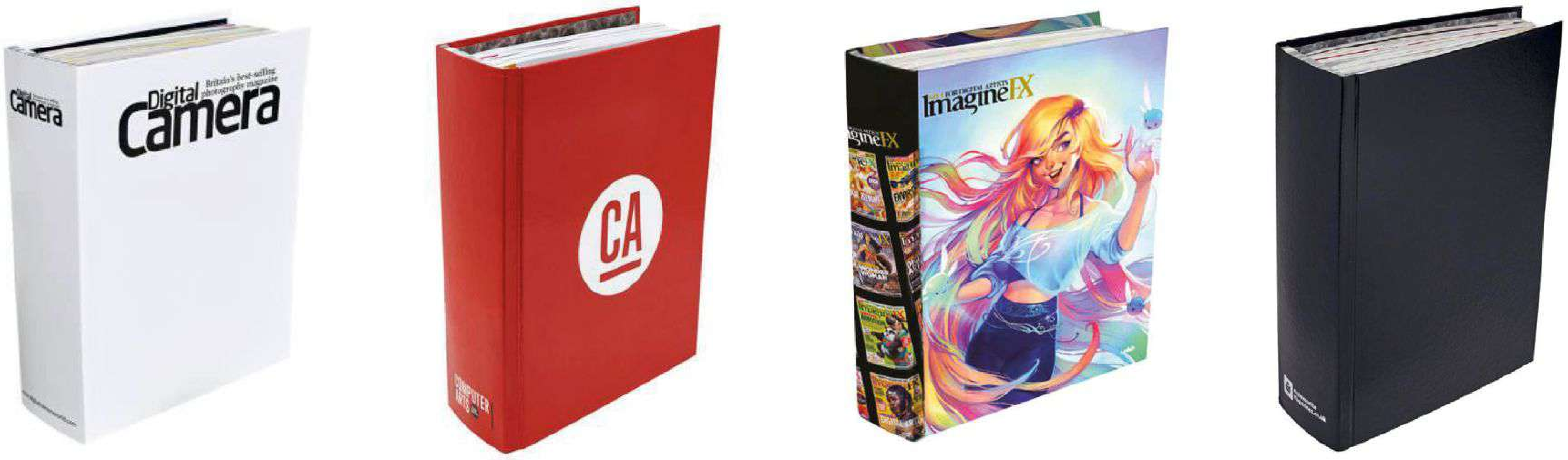

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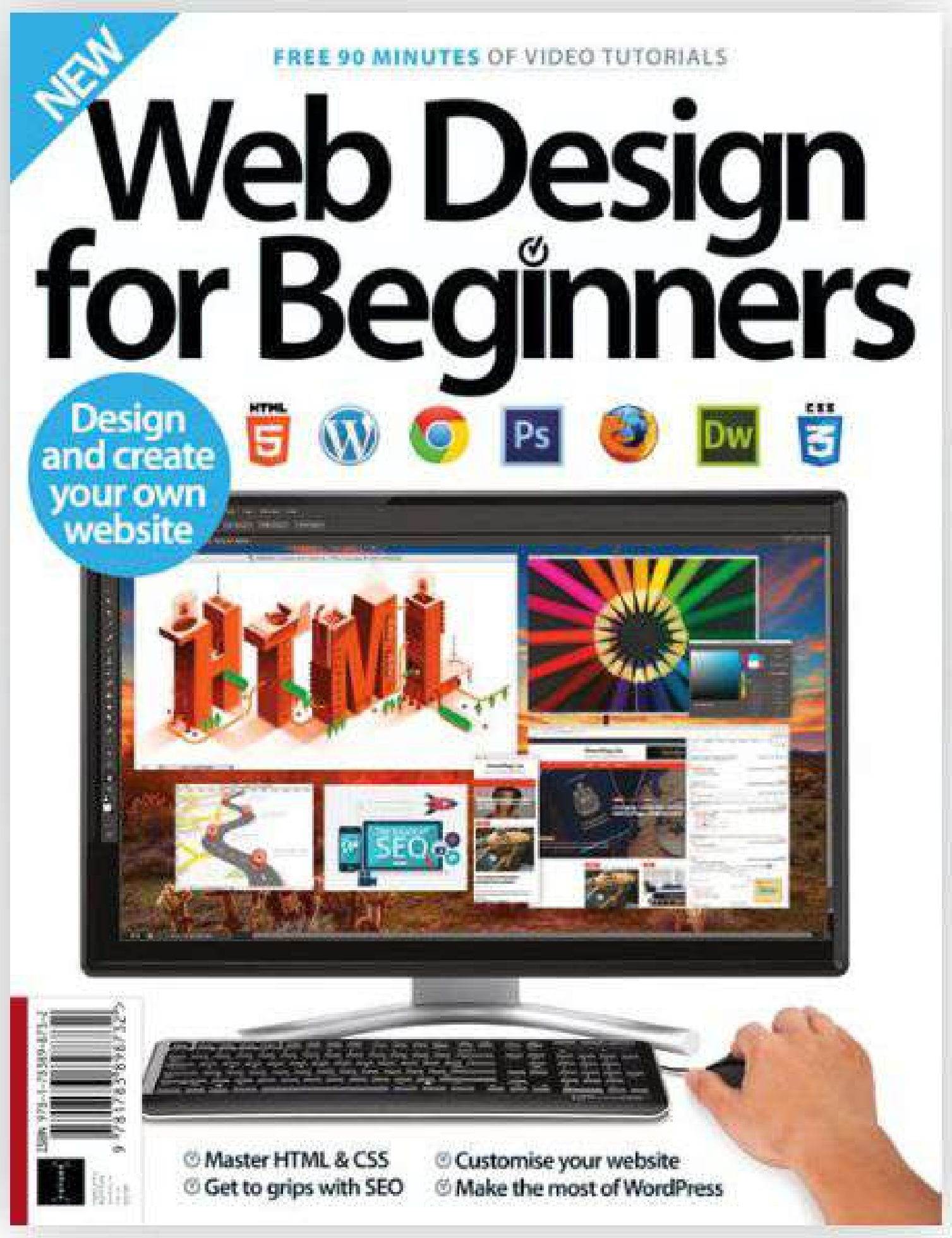
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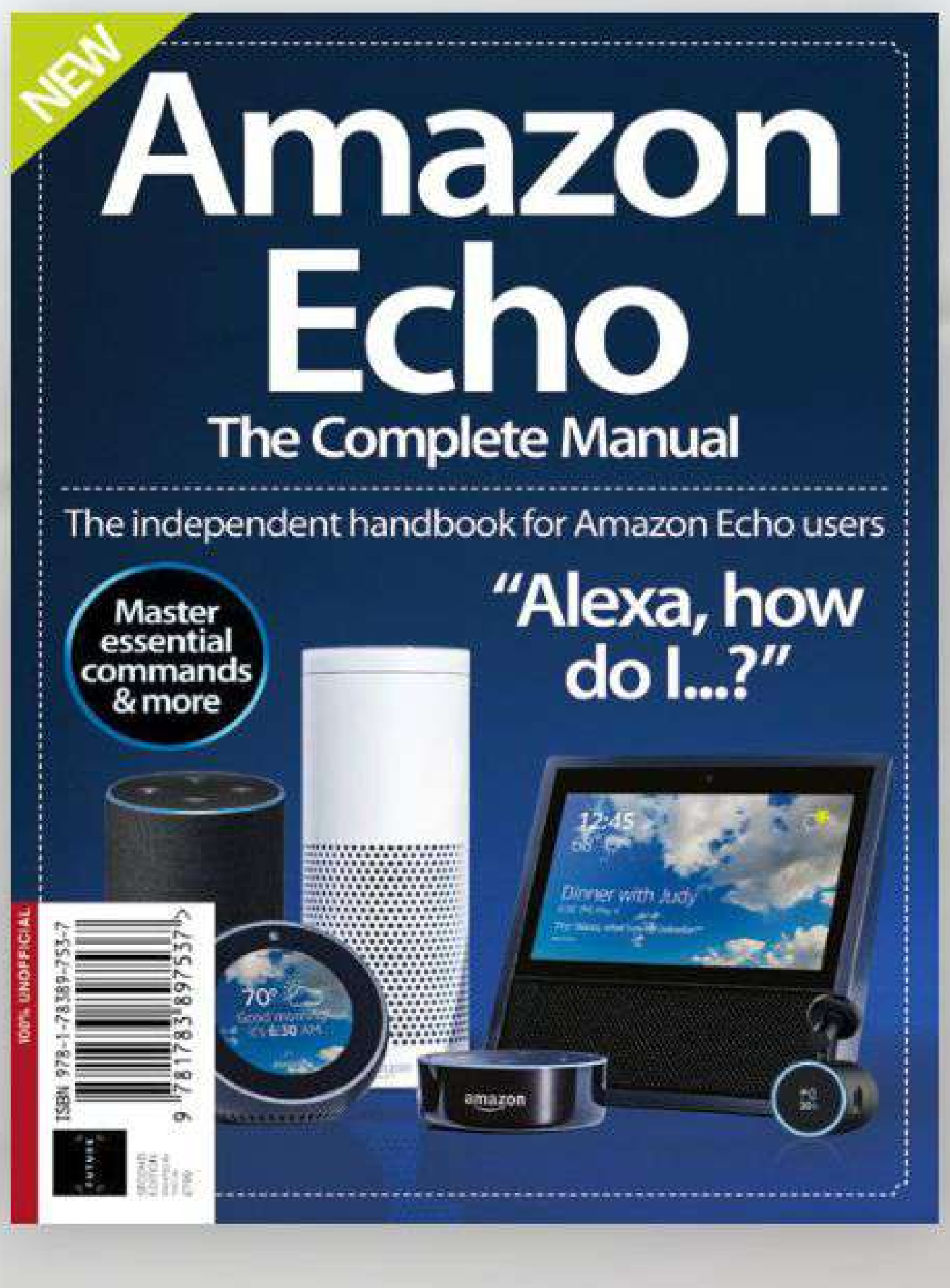
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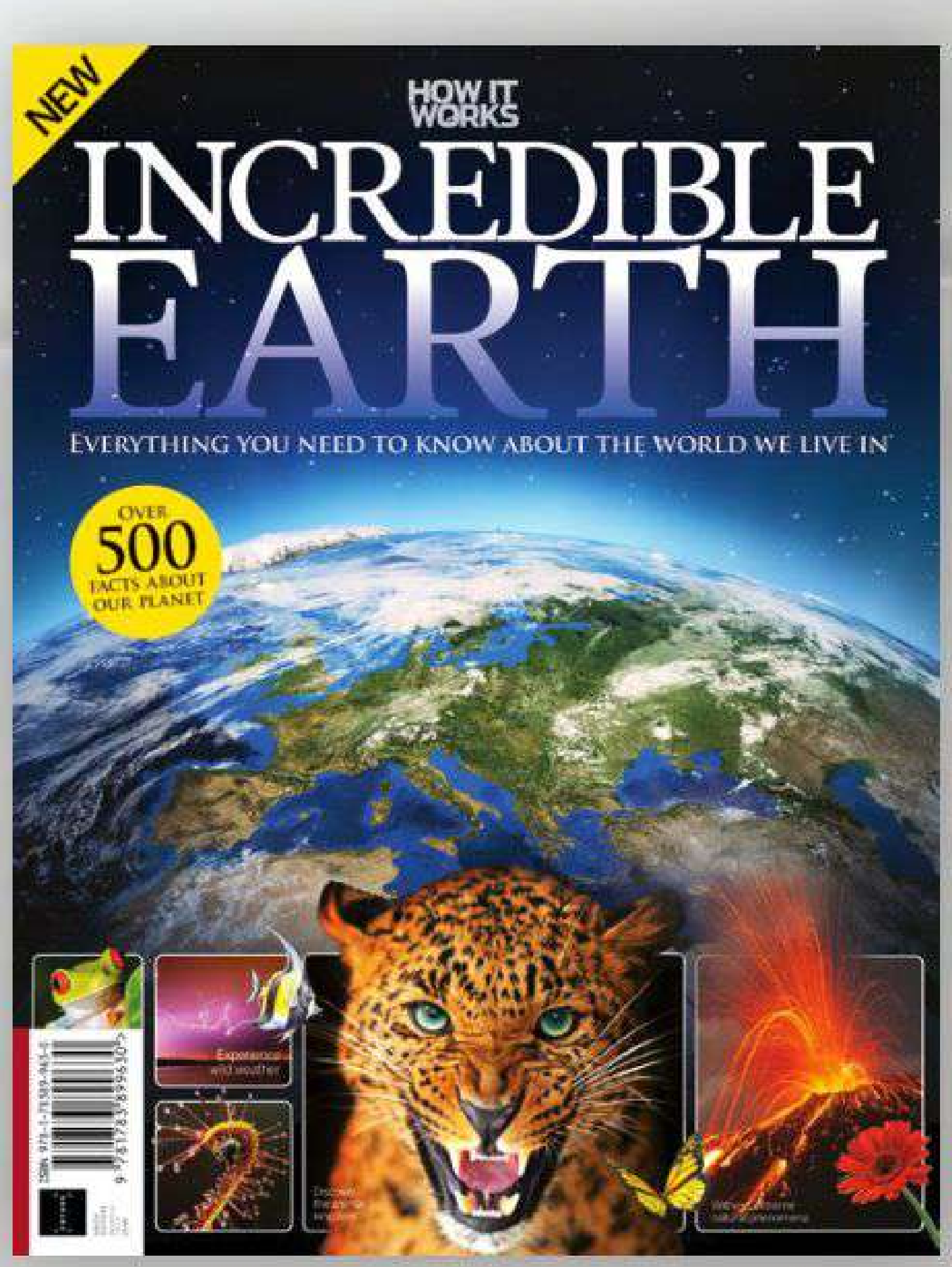
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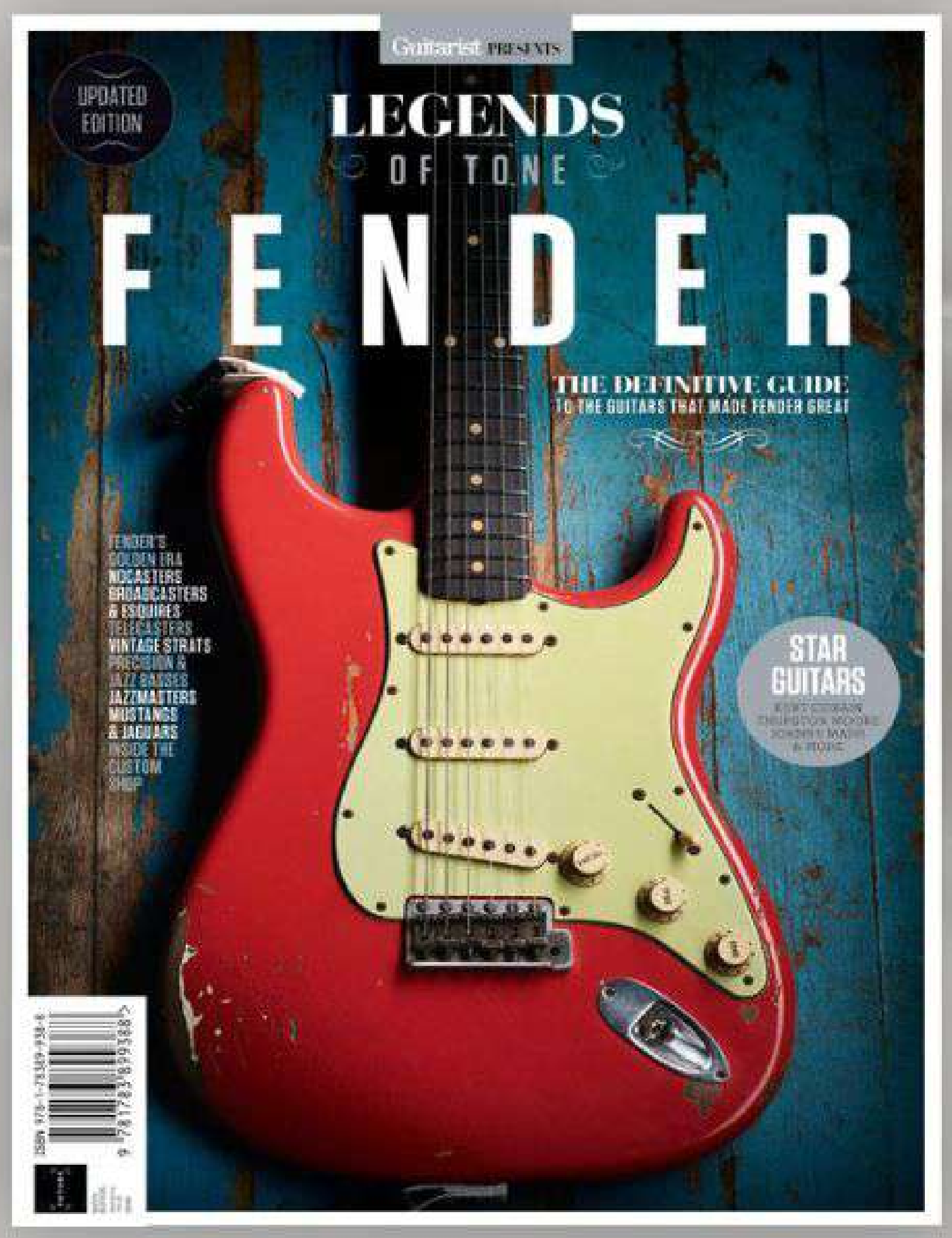
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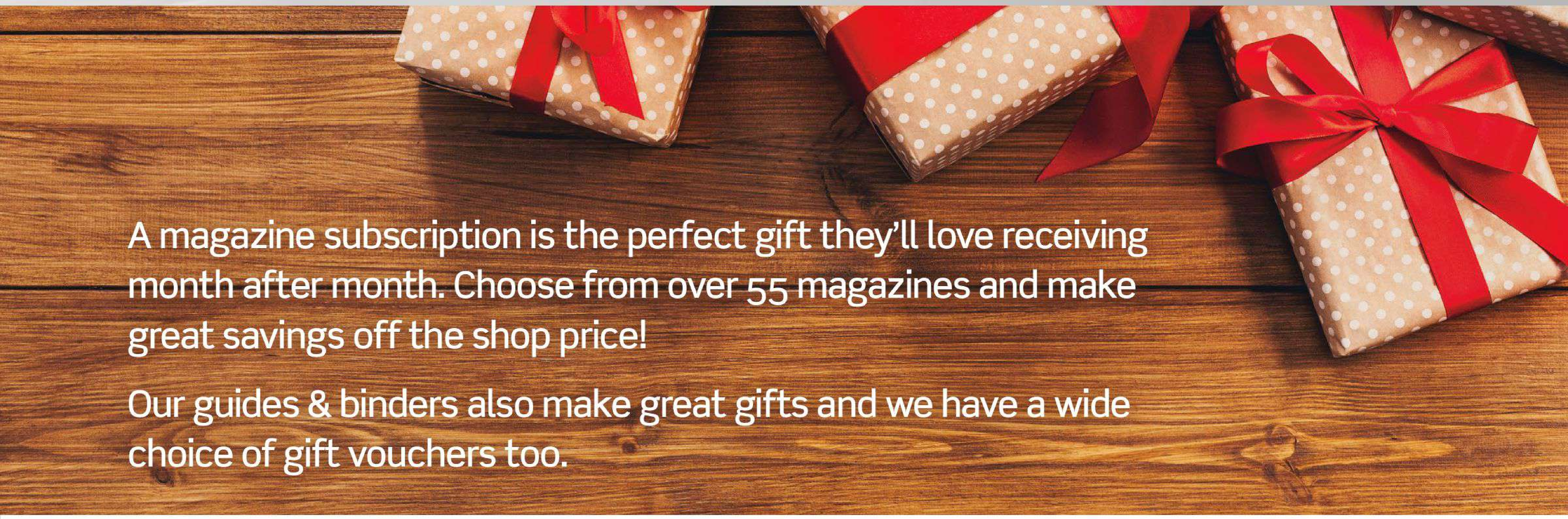

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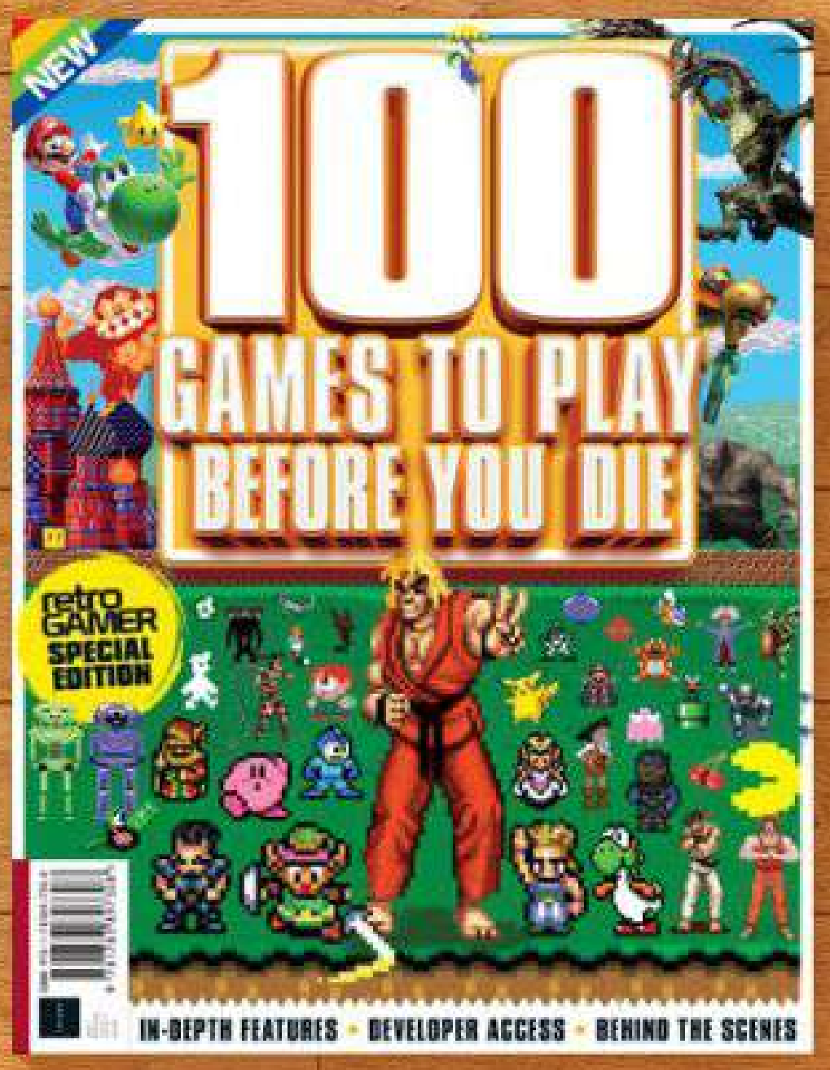

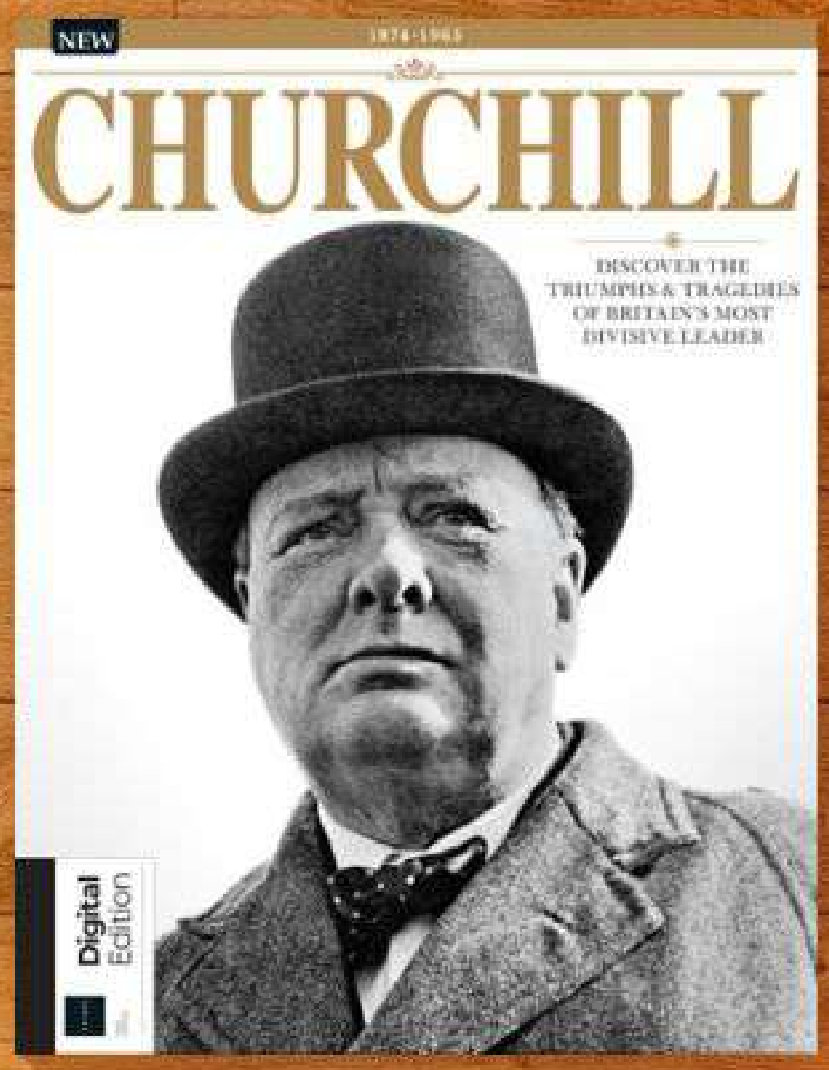

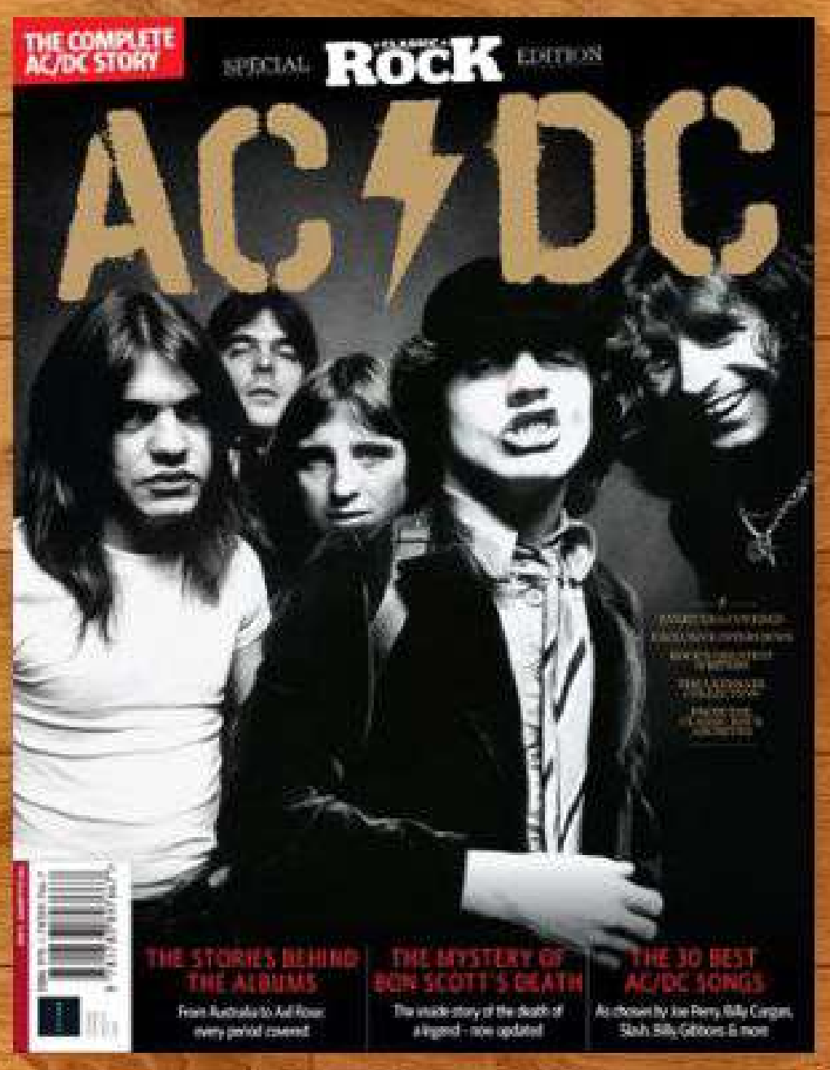
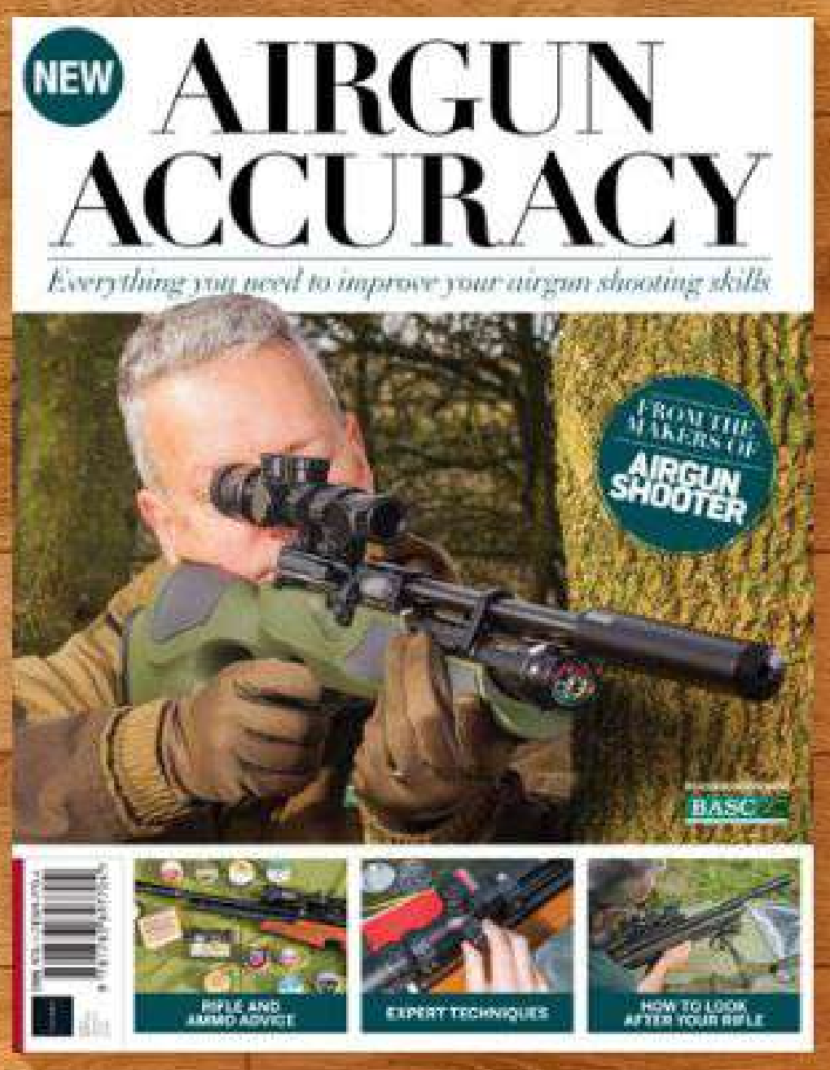

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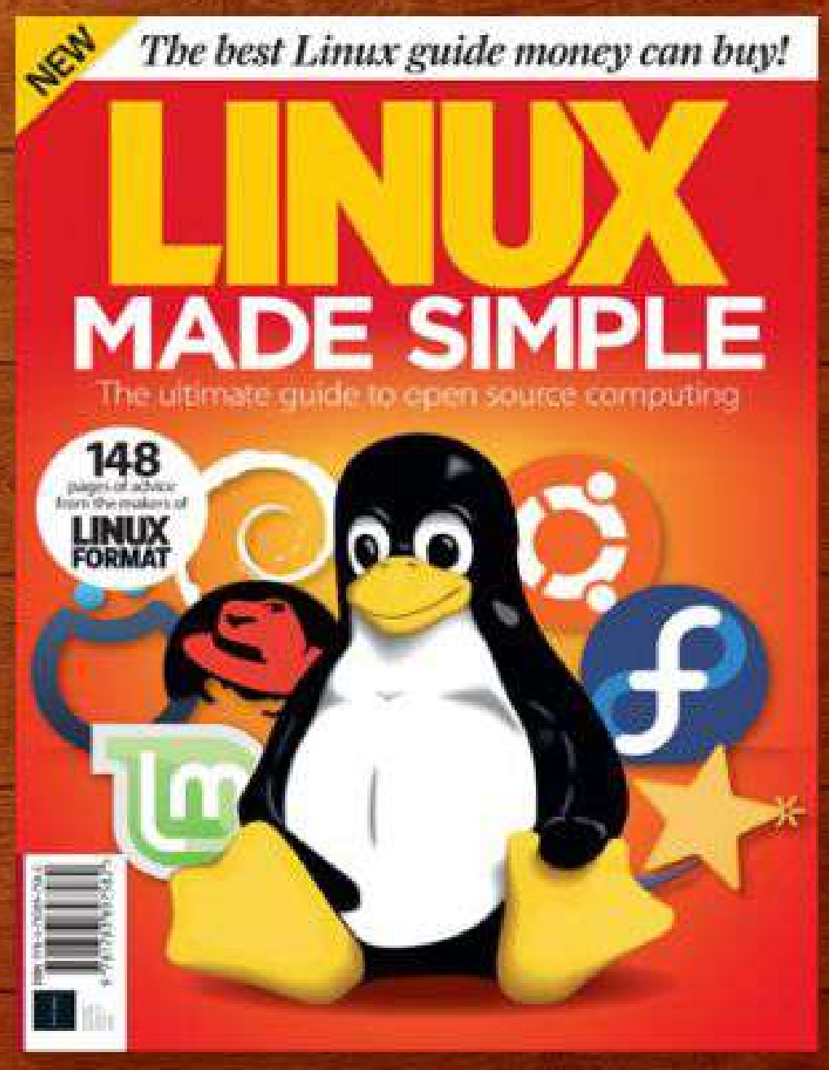

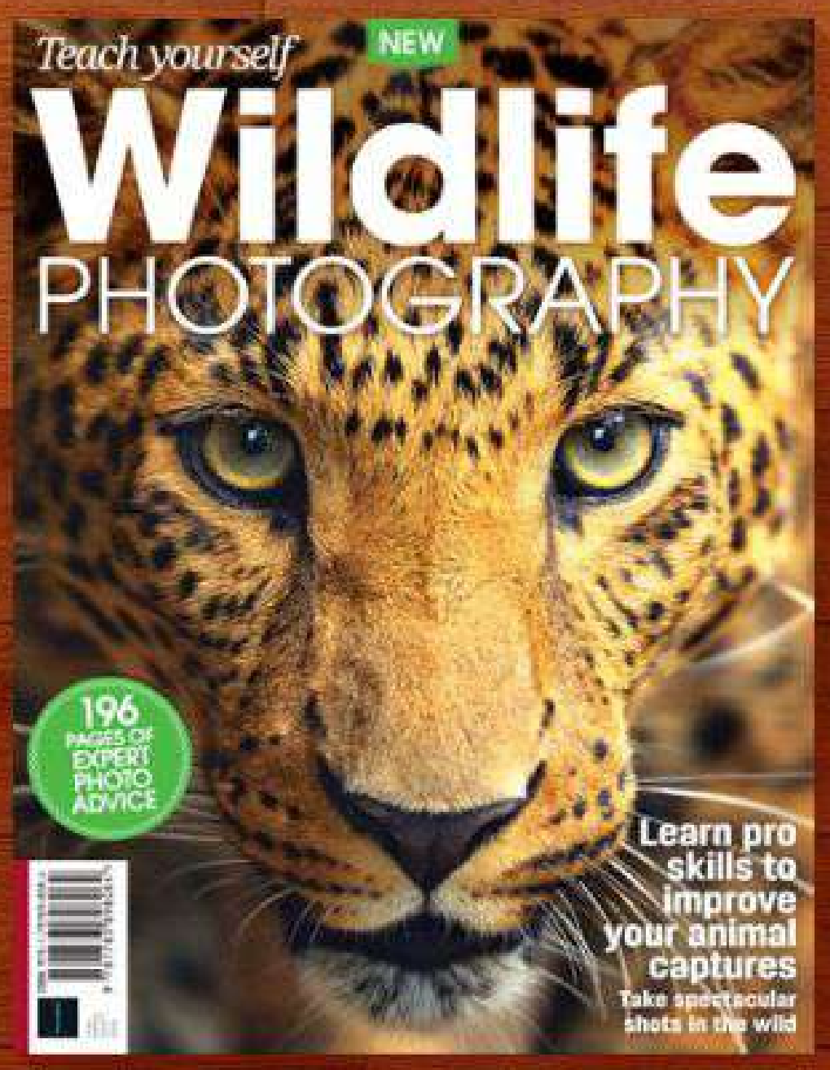
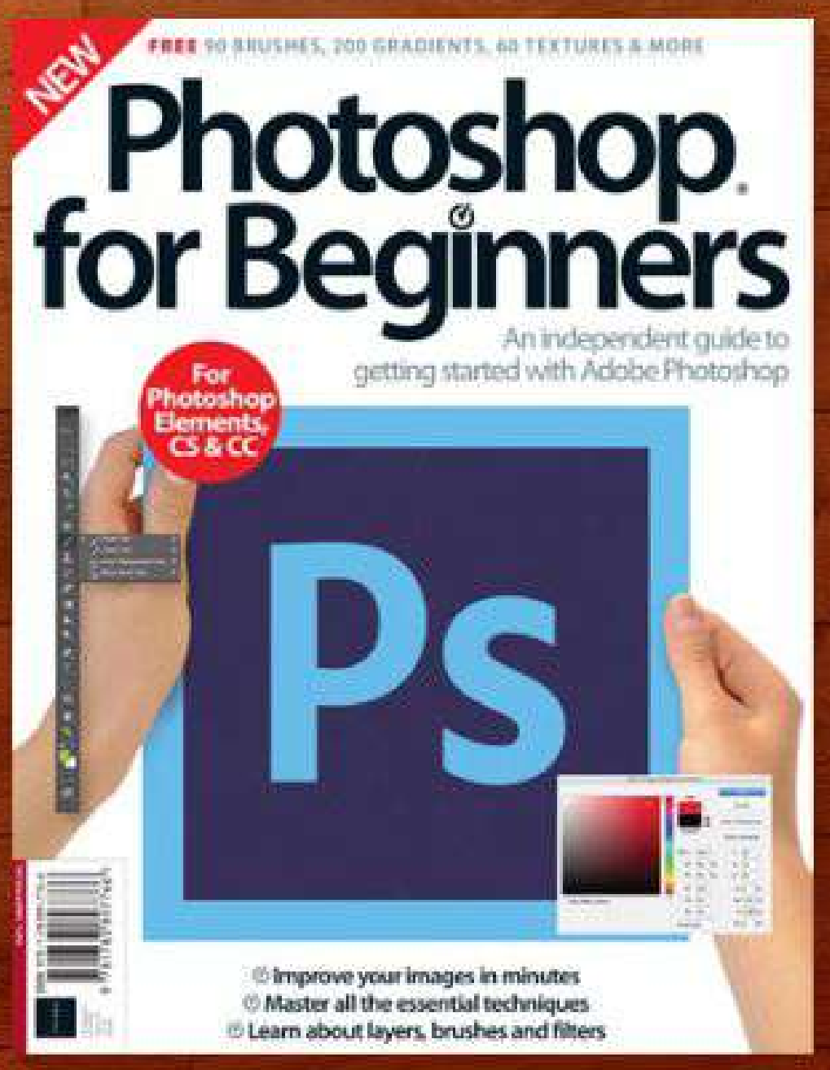

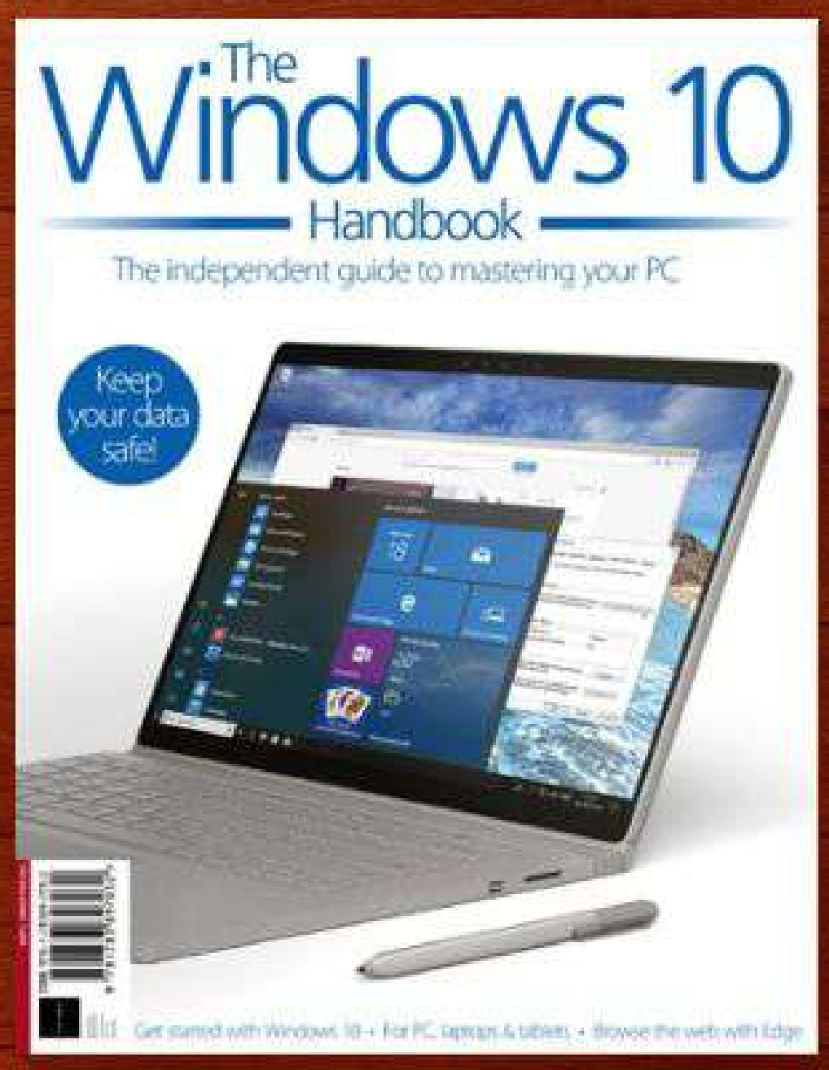
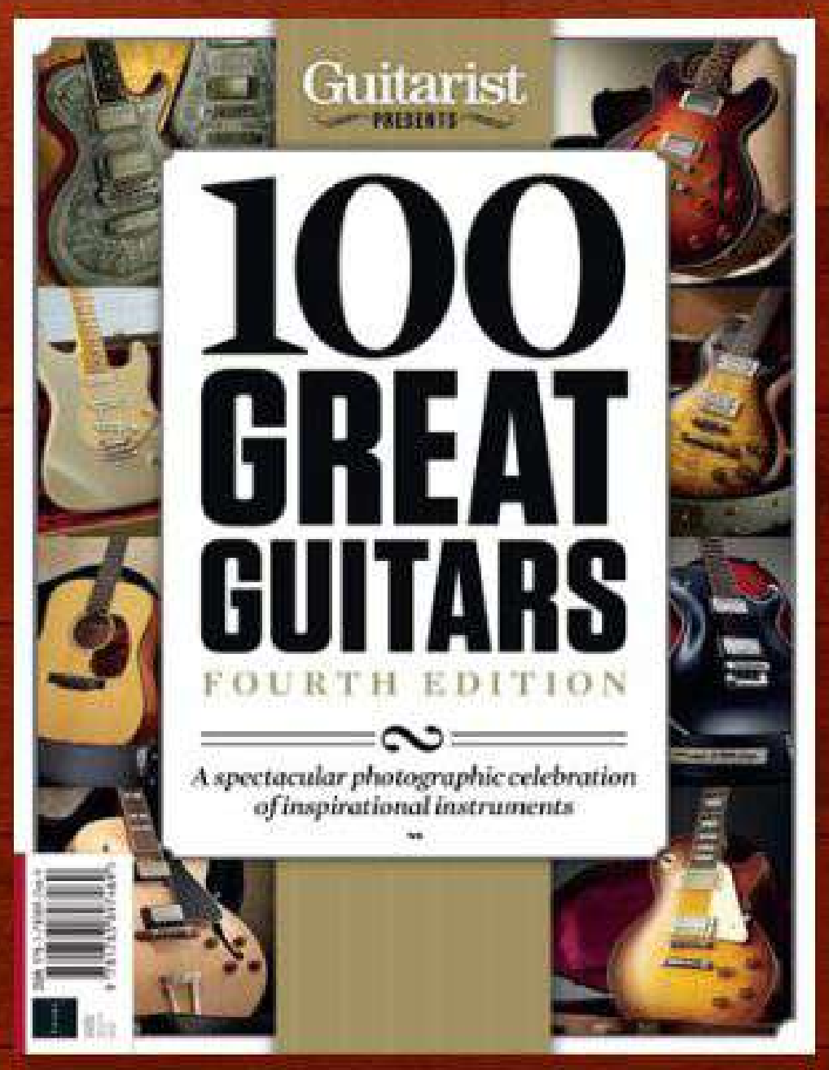

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